METAL SMITH

The Archive of Frank Gardner Hale: Designer - Artist Jeweler - Enamellist

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Learning from Atlanta: Making and Place

BRAVE 3:

Necklace by Boris Bally

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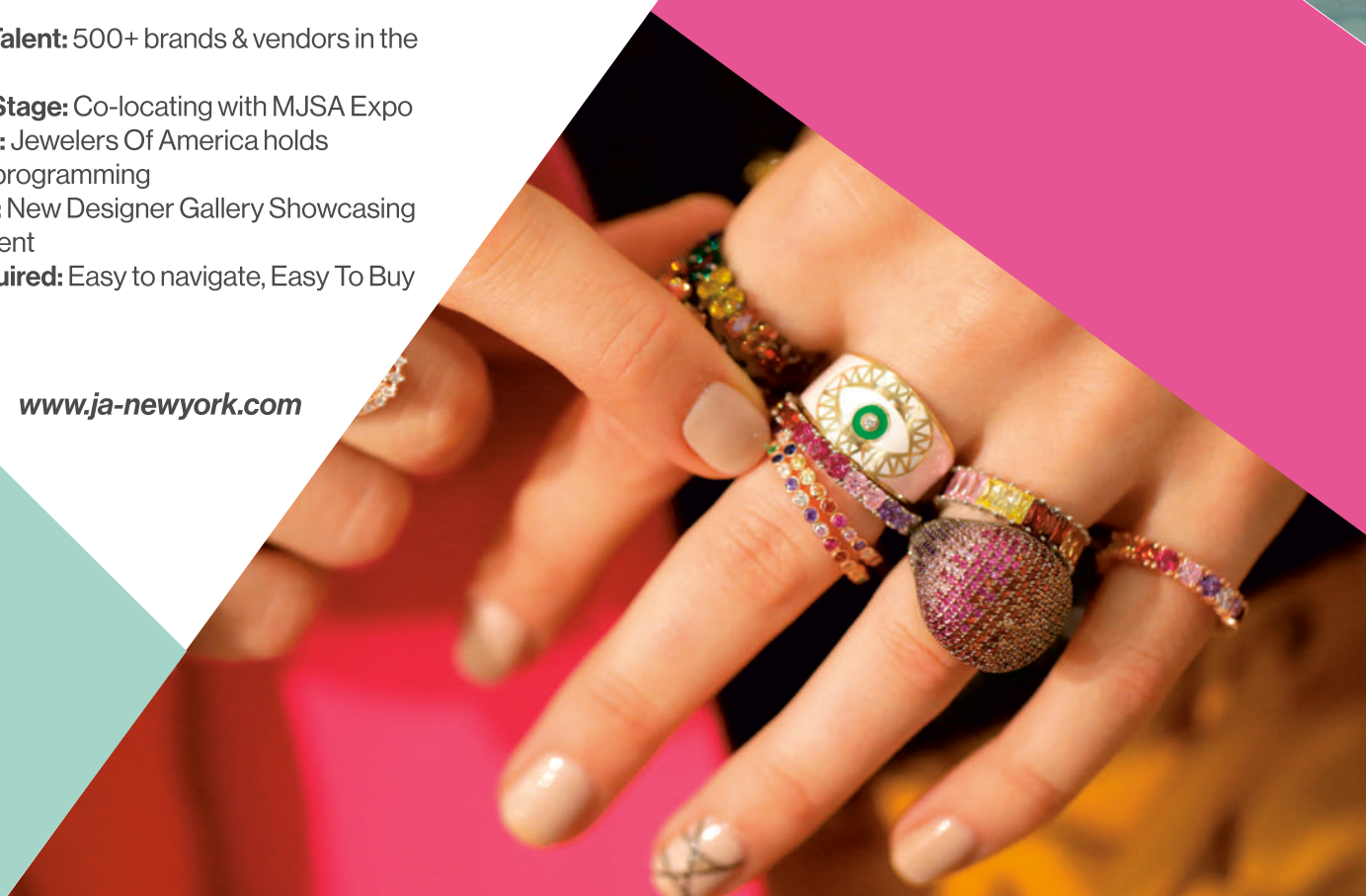

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In the late 1960s, anthropologist Victor Turner coined the term *communitas* to describe the solidarity and shared values that develop among people occupying a ritual or transitional state together. While community can come in lots of different forms, artist communities are often centered in these ideas. They join makers with a wide variety of personalities and backgrounds in shared commitment to the twists of a creative life, or what is possible through deep engagement with a medium.

Community is at the core of many of the stories in this issue of *Metalsmith,* although in distinct ways. The metalsmith Rachel Reichert offers a rich first-person narrative about recently building an artists' residency in the remote and historic town of Atlanta, Idaho, where place, people, and making are inseparable. Curator Meghan Melvin describes the robust Arts and Crafts community in early-twentieth-century Boston, in which metalsmith Frank Gardner Hale created immaculate objects documented by an archive of drawings. In taking on today's "cult" jewelers, who build an audience through Instagram, Kellie Riggs explores how changing artistic and electronic platforms can create both real and virtual communities for art jewelry. Speaking of virtual communities, the anonymous jewelry blogger A thousand facets, who boasts an online following 84,000 strong, presents some of her favorite pieces in our pages. Jeweler Allison Ullmer has built a business that helps the affianced create their own wedding and commitment rings, celebrating the way in which a marriage yields a community of two and a wedding unites a community in celebration.

In May 2019, SNAG's annual conference will celebrate fifty years of the tight-knit community of jewelers and metalsmiths who compose its membership. This issue's Dossier explores the host city of Chicago. You, our community—*Metalsmith*'s readers—are represented in this issue with your letters, and they will continue to be featured in subsequent issues. I hope you will enjoy reading each other's thoughts, and that you'll share your voice with us when there's a piece that strikes your fancy—or doesn't! You can always contact me at editor@snagmetalsmith.org with your ideas. I look forward to being in community with you in this way.

—Emily Zilber, Editor

The mission of *Metalsmith* is to explore, analyze, promote, and document excellence and innovation in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In achieving this goal, SNAG will produce and oversee the direction and content of a publication that will serve as a significant resource for the metalsmithing field. The editorial content of *Metalsmith* will emphasize contemporary activities, makers, and ideas and incorporate supportive content, relevant critical issues, and the exchange of viewpoints.

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Metalsmith 38.3 / Summer 2018

LIFE SIZE

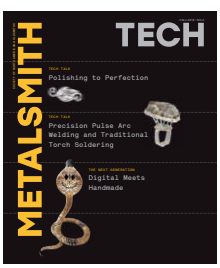
I've just read [Marjorie Simon's] review on **Susan Grant Lewin's gift to the Cooper-Hewitt** (*Metalsmith* 38.3). You've hit on a point that has been troubling me for years: that of showing images of work that have no relationship to their actual scale, such as a ring blown way up beyond its actual size next to a necklace shown the size of same said ring. This year, I've been made a Fellow of the American Craft Council. They are doing articles on all of us [for *American Craft* magazine]. I've asked them (they are showing three of my pieces) if they would please show them actual scale, as I would rather have less work shown to accomplish this. They were considering six to eight. Happily, they have said yes, we like the idea, and will do this. In the catalog Gallery Loupe produced for *Thomas Gentille: Twenty-First Century* (2010), I have had all work in that book REPRODUCED IN ACTUAL SIZE. If you do not have a copy and would like one, I will ask Gallery Loupe to send you one as a gift...and really to thank you for bringing this to attention in your article.

—Thomas Gentille, Artist

METHODS MATTER

I so much enjoyed the first issue of *Metalsmith Tech,* and I have referred to numerous articles in that issue in discussions with colleagues and students. **Benjamin Dory's article on electrolytic etching using copper nitrate** was of particular interest and has changed the etching methods that I teach in my Introductory Metals course. Sustainable methodologies that we utilize and pass on to our students is something that I have been thinking about, and so this article and the ability to re-think the solutions we are using for etching was timely. I was thrilled with the new addition of *Metalsmith Tech* to SNAG publications, as it harkens back to the early *Goldsmith's Journal* that I used to thumb through as a grad student. It also creates a great forum for process-based research that reminds me of metalsmithing graduate-level thesis work from some of the early members of our field. *Metalsmith Tech* is such a valuable and welcome resource!

—Frankie Flood, Associate Professor, Metalsmithing & Jewelry Design Area Head, Appalachian State University



Metalsmith Tech No. 2 / Fall 2018

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

As a student of CAD advocates Stanley Lechtzin, Doug Bucci, and Emily Cobb, I have only positive things to say about bridging the divide. In *Metalsmith Tech 2,* I was pleased to see that **"Digital Meets Handmade: Conversations about Jewelry, Technology, and Education"** approached the topic in new ways. I am far more interested in discovering the intersectionality of the digital and handmade rather than focusing on their inherent differences. The most important topic addressed was education, specifically changing the way we define studio practices. Sunyoung Cheong at the University of Kansas is on the right track with this. By fostering an inclusive and diverse learning environment where students can utilize many tools in problem solving, we create thinkers who are inquisitive, self-reliant, and know there are no boundaries in how we find answers.

—Emily Culver, Artist

Marissa Saneholz
The hits just keep coming, 2016
copper, enamel, pearls, sterling silver, stainless steel
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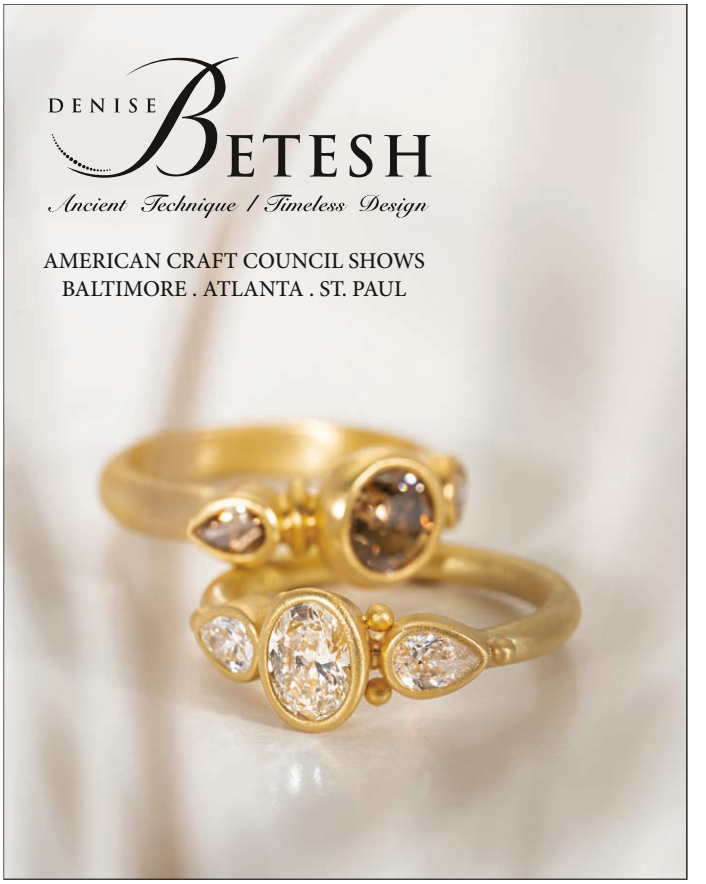

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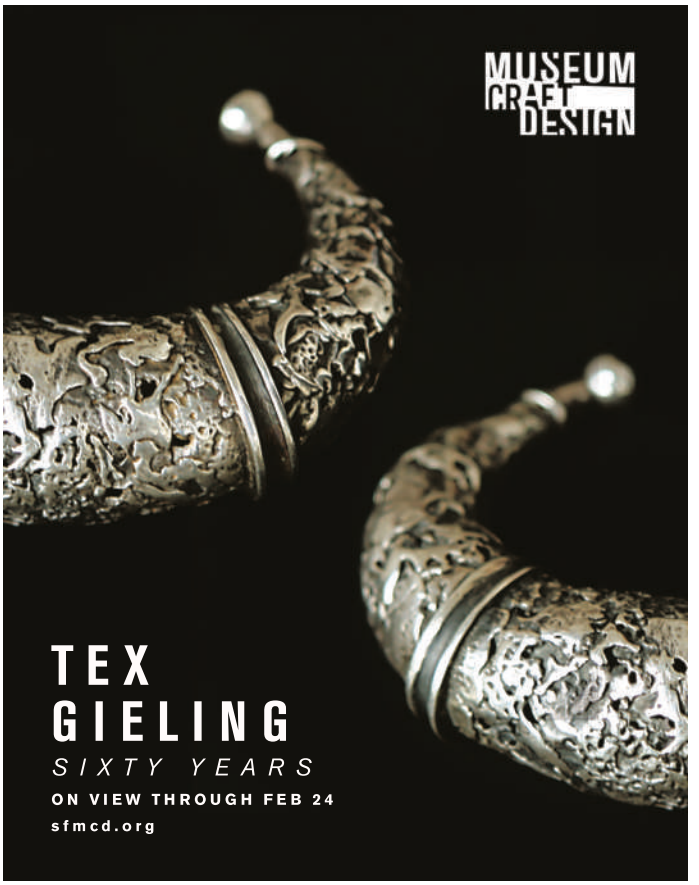

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"Bird of Paradise" necklace by Tammy B. • Photo by Cole Rodger

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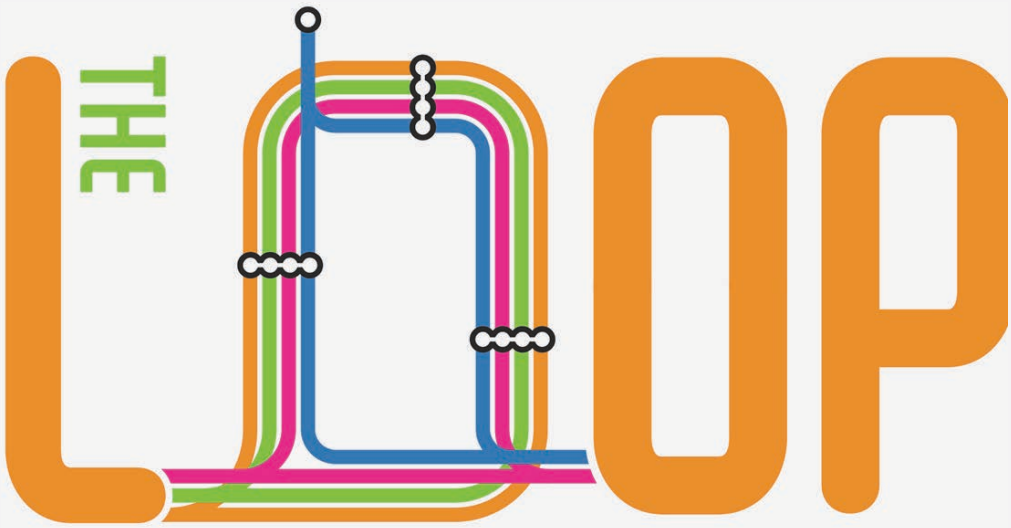
Mary Hallam Pearse. *Rock On*, 2014. Gold, silver.
Courtesy of the artist.



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: NAMITA G. WIGGERS

SNAG is delighted to announce that noted curator, educator and writer Namita G. Wiggers will be opening our 2019 conference with a Keynote presentation that synthesizes histories of jewelry and craft in North America in a broader socio-cultural narrative that includes those who make and the work they make in conversation with those who write, curate, and sell.

Namita G. Wiggers is a curator, educator, and writer based in Portland, Oregon. She is the Director of the Master of Arts in Critical and Historical Craft Studies, Warren Wilson College, North Carolina. Wiggers leads Critical Craft Forum. From 2004-14, she served as the Curator (2004-12) and then Director and Chief Curator (2012-14) of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon.

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– Paul Klee

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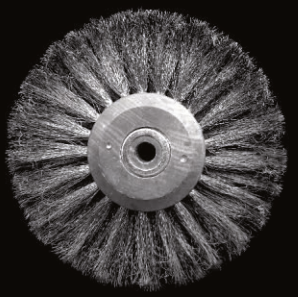

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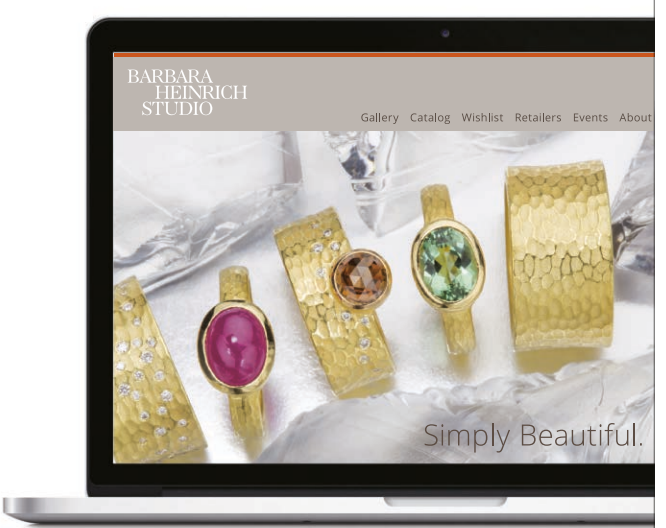
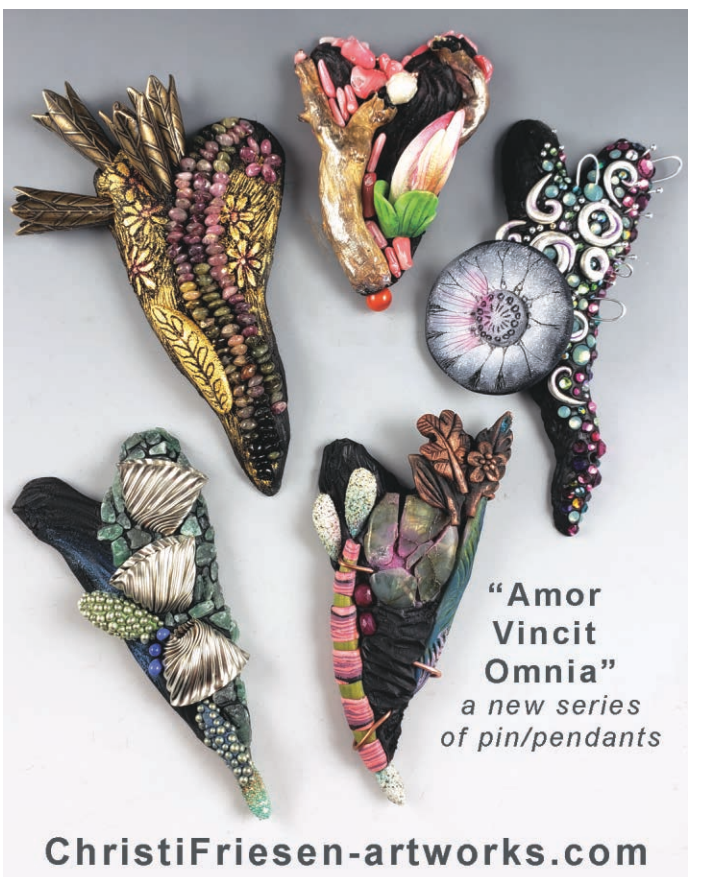




NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BELLA NEYMAN

FEMALE EMPOWERMENT THROUGH JEWELRY MAKING

Most jewelers will agree that while making jewelry is a stressful endeavor (especially if your livelihood depends on it), the actual act can be therapeutic, rewarding, and offer a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded individuals. A study conducted by Carolyn Adams-Price and Bernard Steinman of Mississippi State University that surveyed twenty-nine female jewelers aged 31 to 64 stated that "for many of the jewelry making women, participation in creative activities directly improves well-being, either internally, or through a sense of accomplishment that is visible to the outside world."[1]

There are many organizations around the country that use jewelry making as a means to support women and "do good." *Mend on the Move,* an organization founded by Joanne Ewald in 2015, empowers women by teaching them how jewelry-making and business skills can help them take control of their lives and help other survivors. The organization employs five women living in Samaritas House in Detroit (also referred to as Heartline), who are victims of sexual abuse, recovering addicts, homeless, or on probation from criminal offense. While Ewald's primary mission is to provide opportunities to the makers, she is also supporting her city through the use of recycled materials from the automotive industry, like salvaged car seat leather from Eagle Ottawa by Lear, or retainer ring washers from the Ford Mustang, donated by Ford's New Model Programs Development Center. Ewald says, "I wanted to use a material that was symbolic of our mission. Auto parts seemed perfectly fitting to serve women locally here in the Motor City."[2]

The women spend two days each week making the jewelry and are paid $10 an hour. With about twenty pieces in the collection, the jewelry ranges in price from $12 to $28, making it incredibly affordable for the makers and the consumers. "The beauty of our program is that the designs are purposefully simple," Ewald says. "Many of our makers are transitional, so we want them to be able to catch on quickly, and in a relatively short training period, they can feel they are doing something very worthy by contributing to our cause. We have a couple of pieces that a maker can accomplish the day she begins working for Mend. This is so important for our women: to feel they have what it takes to accomplish a task and then are ready for the bigger challenges of more complicated pieces." The jewelry is retailed in several shops around Detroit, including the gift shop of the Henry Ford Museum. A survivor herself, Ewald began making jewelry in 2007 "as part of my own healing process." While she took courses at the suburban Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, she is primarily self taught.

Modeling *Mend on the Move* jewelry

Another model for empowerment through jewelry was given a great PR boost on the red carpet recently. In fall 2018, the actress Viola Davis appeared at the Toronto International Film Festival wearing a beautiful

Viola Davis

Courtesy of Elizabeth Stewart

and substantial beaded necklace that set the jewelry world ablaze. Many were surprised to discover that the necklace was not made by a hot young designer but by House of Yimama, a company started by Los Angeles-based Ntando Kunene in 2013, and retailed on Etsy. Born in South Africa and of Zulu descent, Kunene wanted to come up with a creative solution to help women in her hometown of Durban. Aware of the beading skills in Zulu tribes, Ntando set out to find a bead maker who could oversee a group of women capable of creating intricate bead necklaces. Kunene explains, "In Zulu culture, beading was taught to young girls by older girls and women who had the skill passed down to them from generation to generation. It was actually one of many activities that was used to socialize young girls. During the hours spent creating beadwork, girls were taught different songs, or gained life lessons from the gossip stories that were shared by older women, about anything they cared to discuss as a way of teaching the young girls."[3]

Kunene says the company "works with independent suppliers who supply different sellers. The group is made up of ten women who range in age from mid-twenties to early-forties." On the House of Yimama Etsy page, Kunene writes that the sales from these necklaces "help to empower the young women we buy from, who support their families with the income generated from their sales. We strongly believe that Africa needs jobs instead of aid, and we are blessed to be able to contribute, albeit on a small scale, towards job creation." She also says, "Beyond that, it gives me immense pleasure to be able to assist the artisans that produce these exquisite pieces to not only earn a living, but also to celebrate and preserve the ancient practices from the majestic cultures of Africa."

https://www.mendonthemove.org/
https://www.etsy.com/shop/HouseofYimama

Ntando Kunene

Photo by Angela L. Torres

1 Carolyn E. Adams-Price and Bernard A. Steinman, "Crafts and Creative Expression: A Qualitative Study of the Meaning of Creativity in Women Who Make Jewelry in Midlife," *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 65, no. 4 (2007): 315-333. / 2 Email exchange between author and Joanne Ewald, October 10, 2018. / 3 Email exchange between author and Ntando Kunene, October 8, 2018.

ALLISON ULLMER
FOR LOVE AND MONEY

BY ANDREA DINOTO

ALLISON ULLMER'S INITIALS, AU, also just happen to be the symbol for the chemical element gold. "People *do* get it sometimes," says the Portland, Oregon-based jeweler, given that her commitment to gold and other precious metals forms the basis of her practice, called, perhaps inevitably, AU. What's unusual about Ullmer's approach is that she's found a way to apply fashion-marketing savvy to limited production and custom (often one-off) work, while conducting a second business, Ringed, based on nothing less than true love. AU showcases Ullmer's signature baroque-inspired style, while Ringed offers couples a one-day workshop in metalsmithing, with Ullmer guiding them in the creation of their own gold bands—whether for wedding or commitment. The two enterprises together now provide her with an income that moves her closer to her goal: doing what she loves full-time. "I cannot support the mentality of being a 'poor artist,'" she declares, having faced the all-too-common conundrum of earning relatively little after pursuing serious training in metalwork.

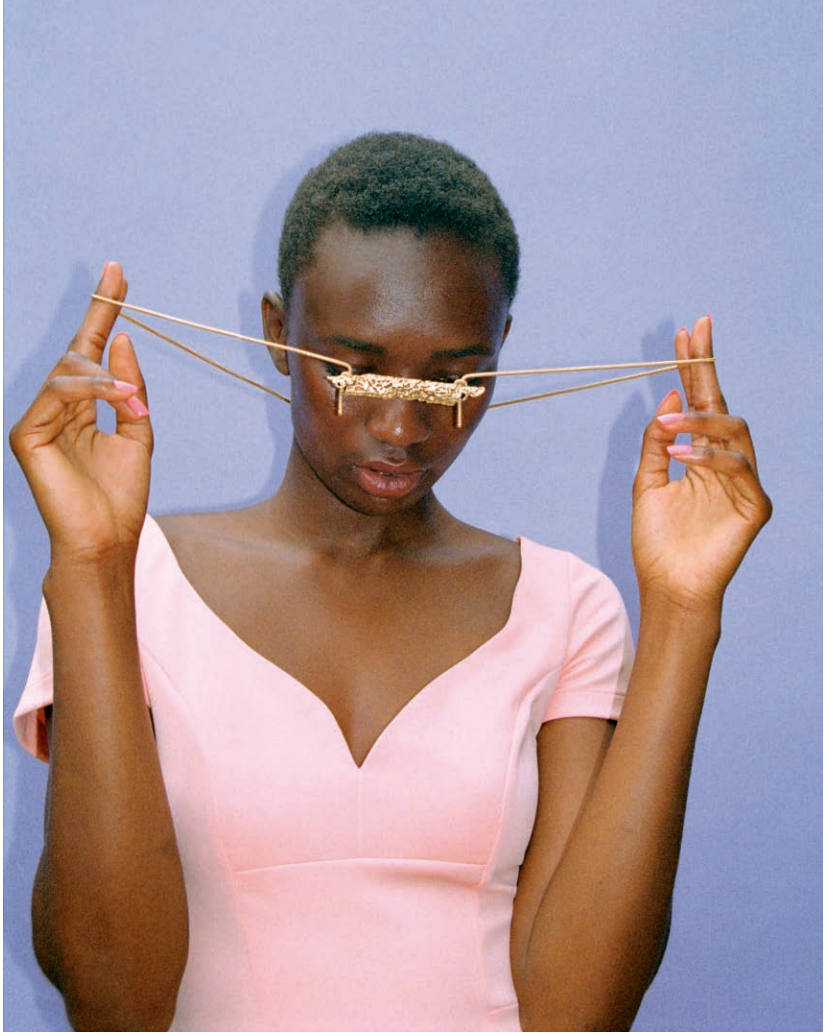
Ullmer holds two degrees in metalsmithing: a BFA (2006) from the University of Oregon, and an MFA (2011) from SUNY New Paltz, which she attended on scholarship. She has taught metalsmithing for more than ten years at Oregon College of Art and Craft and other academic and workshop venues. From 2011 to 2013, she also worked as a wine and beer steward at the New Seasons Market in Portland, a strenuous job that required a lot of heavy lifting. After incurring a debilitating injury, and already having Type 1 diabetes, she was at that time disqualified from obtaining health insurance. "I was paying upwards of $500 a month out of pocket for my health care," she says. Ullmer makes perfectly clear that "despite my great training, I never made more than $17,000 a year as an artist until recently. What does that truly mean for our life after school?" She notes, "I took business classes. It's just silly that it's not required in fine arts. We are part of commerce, whether we like it or not."

In 2014, an unexpected inheritance enabled Ullmer to plan and create her first AU collection, with designs based on her undergraduate thesis. While recuperating from the injury she incurred at New Seasons, she had begun to explore ways to make her jewelry line more profitable. Fashion-forward publications—*W* magazine in particular, she noticed—featured dazzling photography in stylized spreads that told a story, and she began to understand the power of narrative as a branding and marketing technique for both print and digital platforms. Imagining her striking designs worn by models posed in evocative settings, she determined the approach suited the AU demographic: "well-educated women with an interest in art, travel, and quality items." To that end, she enlisted professional photographer Cully Wright and stylist Julia Platt-Hepworth to create spreads for her website.

Ullmer's bold motifs are borrowed and abstracted from classic baroque frames and patterns. Her pieces begin as pierced metal which is then molded and cast. The resultant gold forms appear molten, as in her bestselling *Baroque* band, or crumpled, as in *Rosebud* studs. Semi-unique items include unisex pendant necklaces with vermeil snake chains embedded into chunky stones. Not for sale is a one-off pair of gold-plated sunglasses with oversized reticulated frames worthy of Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana—they're occasionally rented out for weddings and special events. "There's enough subtlety in life," she declares. "I want some energy and beauty!"

Ullmer's sensual photo spreads—the most provocative of which was for her

Allison Ullmer
Baroque Band, 2017
18 karat recycled gold
6 × 1.5 mm
Photo by Richard Gehrke



Allison Ullmer
Bar Necklace, 2016
vermeil
Stylist:
Julia Platt-Hepworth;
Makeup and Hair:
Jessica Belknap;
Model: Binta Dibba
Photo by Cully Wright

A couple participating in a one-day fabrication workshop with Ullmer.

Courtesy of Ringed Studio
Photo by Amanda Goff

2017 collection—now adorn both her website and her Instagram account, and, she reports, they've succeeded in drawing a niche audience for limited production work, and also for commissions. But after launching three collections, the need remained to supplement her income. "I wanted to be able to continue using my skills," she says, "without giving up the passion and joy of being in the studio." A friend encouraged her to consider doing workshops, such as those that had sprung up around the country, for couples who wanted to make their own wedding and/or commitment rings. "It was the most wonderful aha moment," Ullmer says. "It has always been a joy for me, being around people, and this seemed like a phenomenal opportunity to share my craft at a joyous moment in their lives." She launched Ringed in 2017, reaching out to wedding networks and bridal shows, where she discovered "a different world," she says. "It's mostly a one-item clientele, and the industry puts a lot of pressure on a couple. Prices can spiral." (The Ringed website gives detailed information on costs, which vary depending on factors such as type of metal, complexity, optional stonework, etc.)

Ullmer employs her formidable networking skills to create the word-of-mouth buzz that any new venture requires. "At a bridal show in February," she reports, "two people won the workshop, then their best friends took it as well." Couples most often opt for plain bands in white or yellow gold, but for those who choose platinum, Ullmer requires they take a wax-carving workshop. "They do the carving, then I make the mold and it's cast." One Tennessee couple, who returned for the sanding and finishing steps, had their platinum bands later set with Montana sapphires.

In September 2018 Ullmer herself got married; and, yes, she did a workshop with her fiancé to make their own wedding bands. "I carved his and he carved mine," she says: his in rose gold, hers in yellow gold. "He loves what I do," she says, "and we've made a pact to make this work."

Andrea DiNoto writes on art, craft, and design.

www.allisonullmer.com
www.ringedpdx.com
www.instagram.com/allisonullmerjewelry/

IN THE STUDIO: LIN CHEUNG

BY SASHA NIXON

Lin Cheung's bench

Photo: Lin Cheung

Lin Cheung

Photo:
Nick Clements

JEWELRY, AT ITS CORE, is deeply personal. Artist Lin Cheung operates on this intimate scale, creating objects that pluck out distinct strings of personal ritual and sentimentality. Cheung sees her small studio, located two hours outside of London (where she teaches at celebrated arts and design college Central Saint Martins), as a purely functional space, split between her living room and one half of the garage, divorced from high emotion. Even so, it is replete with purposeful beauty. Her bench sits in the living room, with tools carefully organized by type in containers. An abundance of natural light filters through large windows, illuminating her work surface. The lapidary in the garage includes a trim saw, cab grinders, and a diamond wheel machine that Cheung purchased used, reconditioning, rewiring, and installing new motors herself. In both her internationally acclaimed jewelry and this physical space, Cheung bridges the gap between sentimentality and practicality through thoughtful attention to the "ordinary."

Cheung uses precious or unexpected materials and processes to address the ordinary aspects of jewelry that she finds interesting beyond the artwork itself—even the boxes and bubble wrap she uses to contain it. Her "Keep" series examines how she stores and protects jewelry in her personal collection, using rock crystal to mimic the appearance of the crumpled plastic Ziploc bags into which Cheung's jewelry is carefully tucked away. Rock crystal has been prized throughout history for its translucence and ability to magnify and reflect light, but Cheung uses this material to transform an unceremonious container into a jewel; titles like *Keep–Old Pearl Necklace* (2018) and *Keep–Benita's Brooch* (2018) hint at the precious piece wrapped within. In *Two Brooches Inside a Jewelry Box* (2016), rock crystal allows gold brooch pins to be viewed from the front. Once fitted together, these two transparent brooches form their own jewelry box.

The self-referential nature of Cheung's work makes it particularly poignant. She owns the brooch by Benita and an old pearl necklace for which her pendants are titled. *Two Brooches Inside a Jewelry Box* is an ode to Cheung's practice of storing two brooches together in a box made for one. All of these works speak to the life of her jewelry when it is not being worn. Cheung examines her practice of storing her jewelry more informally with new, more practical packaging, and how this seeming informality might convey preciousness, care, and personalization rather than disregard. One particularly powerful example of this is Cheung's *Memoria* earrings. After her mother's death, she began to wonder where her mother had found such a large collection of earring backs, and why she felt compelled to keep them.' She created new earrings using the found earring backs as both the back and the front as a work of remembrance.

Cheung frequently looks to the intersection of jewelry and everyday life for inspiration, considering "what we do with jewelry: where we place it on the body, where it lives off

Lin Cheung
Keep – Benita's Brooch, 2018
carved rock crystal, nylon cord

Keep – Old Pearl Necklace, 2018
carved rock crystal, nylon cord
Courtesy of Lin Cheung

the body, at rest, how jewelry is cared for, how it moves through time, how it changes owners, how it becomes reshaped and transformed?"[2] That these questions continue to provide interest for contemporary jewelers is a testament to the nuance of jewelry's fundamental significance: what it communicates, who wears it, when, and why. Cheung's "Together" pins are one example of how her work adds to the contemporary understanding of the powerful and enduring significance of adornment in daily life. Cheung has observed how a wearer often casually interlocks a pair of earrings after taking them off, so as not to lose them. For a "Together" pin, she first creates two archetypal stud earrings—but then permanently interlocks them. In creating a pin from a pair of earrings, Cheung ritualizes this ordinary act. Such familiar habits create emotional connections to jewelry.

Cheung's attention to small, frequently overlooked details makes her an important voice in the contemporary jewelry community. She recently returned from a jewelry symposium organized by Francisca Kweital in Colombia titled "En Construcción II," at which she taught a four-day workshop in Santa Fe de Antioquia for fifteen participants from all over South America. Her workshop encouraged alternative interpretations of jewelry "by treating it as a social phenomenon to observe, discuss, and explore," through a series of creative exercises that manipulated common materials like soap and masking tape. This approach is consistent with Cheung's studio practice of interpreting the ordinary in extraordinary ways, and contains the same sense of whimsy that pervades her worldview. Even the title of her book, *TOMFOOLERY,* which both means foolish behavior and is Cockney rhyming slang for jewelry, evokes her playful and irreverent perspective.

Contrary to the traditional creative process, in which an idea is followed by a sketch and then materials are selected, Cheung has found herself thinking "with the material in hand first, before concepts. Starting ideas from a specific material and technique first is something I've never really practiced before, so I have a renewed sense of enthusiasm for making, almost obsessive, feeling my way through to ideas and concepts based on what's happening to the materials in my hands," she says. Cheung largely taught herself stone carving, after an initial five-day master class with Charlotte De Syllas, and the material continues to draw her creatively with its own unique challenges. Stone forces the maker to relinquish control, only revealing its true beauty at the very last moment. Having begun a sabbatical this fall, Cheung will be spending more time in her studio, reflecting on materials and the social and private lives of jewelry.

Sasha Nixon is a jewelry historian, curator, and metalsmith. She has curated exhibitions for the Museum of Arts and Design and the Bard Graduate Center Gallery, and is the recipient of SNAG's 2017 Emerging Curators grant.

For Nixon's complete interview with the artist visit https://www.snagmetalsmith.org/metalsmith-magazine/metalsmith-extra/

www.lincheung.co.uk

1 Conversation between the author and Valentina Bin, Gallery Manager of Gallery SO, London. November 11, 2017. / **2** Interview with Sasha Nixon, September 1, 2018. All further quotations from the artist are from this conversation.

VAULTWORTHY

BY A THOUSAND FACETS

FOR ALMOST NINE YEARS, I've searched for wonderful pieces of jewelry that are unique, exciting, and inspiring to share with the more than 84,000 international readers of my blog *A thousand facets*. I select works that are not only great to wear, but that convey stories—both our own and those of the more than 1,400 independent designers working in the fields of contemporary, fine, and artisan jewelry that I've featured over the years. A feast for the eyes, the blog allows me to hear stories from all over the world from the artists and enthusiasts following my posts, and to build bridges between different facets of the jewelry community.

Finding jewelry that speaks to my soul makes maintaining the blog a fun endeavor. It takes a great deal of time and research, but it never feels like drudgery. After seeing thousands of pieces, there are works of art and designers that have captured my heart. My taste is eclectic, but statement pieces truly attract me. I champion works that will stimulate conversation, like Judy Geib's necklace made out of mirror images of boulder opals, which creates a dizzying kaleidoscope. While all pieces are special, rings take the front seat as my jewelry of choice. Nothing beats the thrill of gazing at my own hands and marveling at the beautiful pieces of jewelry I own.

I would love to have a jewelry vault to visit regularly, where I could play dress up with timeless, stunning, and unforgettable works from incredible designers. When I look for these "vaultworthy" pieces (I've made a hashtag for people to use when sharing their own examples with our community: #vaultworthy) I don't look at the designer's success, trajectory, or fame. I look at how the work makes me feel and how it has moved me. The possibility of jewelry to make a personal impact: that's the story that I want to share with the world.

A thousand facets is a jewelry blogger based in New York. She has curated her eponymous site since 2010.

Max Danger
Floating Hexagon, 2017
18 karat yellow gold, diamonds
Top hexagon 22 × 24 mm
Courtesy of Danger Jewels
Photo by Simon Lyle Richie

Kika Alvarenga
Tourmaline Ring from Gráfico collection, 2010
silver, rough green tourmalines, gold
27 × 13 mm
Photo by José Terra

Chris Boland
Tourmaline Cluster Monolith Ring, 2018
bi-colour tourmaline, indicolite tourmaline, 18 karat gold, sterling silver
30 × 20 × 20 mm
Courtesy of Chris Boland

Castro Smith
Ring
intaglio engraved rose
gold and black rhodium
Courtesy of DSM

Sharon Layani
Ring, 2014
18 karat gold, baroque pearl
40 × 36 mm
Courtesy of Layani Fine Jewelry

[redacted]
Photo by Klaus Germann

Gregory Larin
"Heart" ring, 2015
3D modeling and gold casting
35 × 26 × 20 mm
Photo by Dima Reinstein

Johnny Ninos
Black Diamond Cabochon with Caged Rubies and White Diamond Clusters, 2018
18 karat yellow gold, 2.29 carat diamond cabochon, white brilliant cut melee diamonds, rubies
Photo by Johnny Ninos

Judy Geib
Boulder Opal Split Necklace, 2017
boulder opals, 22 karat and 18 karat gold, silver
6 3/4 × 6 3/4 in.
Photo by Dirk Vandenberk

Emmeline Hastings
Susurrus Multidrop Earrings
2018
acrylic, oxidized sterling silver, 18 karat rose and yellow gold
Photo by Joe McDonnell

Nikolle Radi
Chevron Earrings, 2018
platinum, 18 karat yellow gold, micro prong-set rubies
1 3/4 in. long
Photo by Dirk Vandenberk

Raluca Buzura
Seaweed Necklace from Extinct Species collection, 2018
porcelain, pigment, glaze, gold luster, artificial leather, gold-filled
Exterior 24 cm wide × 26 cm long × 3 cm high; interior 12 cm wide × 11.5 cm long
Private collection
Photo by Raluca Buzura

UNDER THE COVERS

BY ANA M. LOPEZ

WHAT MIGHT THE THINGS YOU OWN teach you? A.W.N. Pugin was a nineteenth-century architect of the Gothic style who helped shape some of the attitudes of the early Arts and Crafts movement in England. He believed that "honesty in design and construction had a moralizing affect upon the user," and taught them how to behave in contemporary society.[1] Glenn Adamson, curator, theorist, and former Director of the Museum of Arts and Design, suggests we might learn empathy through material intelligence. His new book, *Fewer Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects,* posits that the proper consideration of things could go some way in curing the ills of contemporary culture.

Fewer, Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects
By Glenn Adamson
New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018

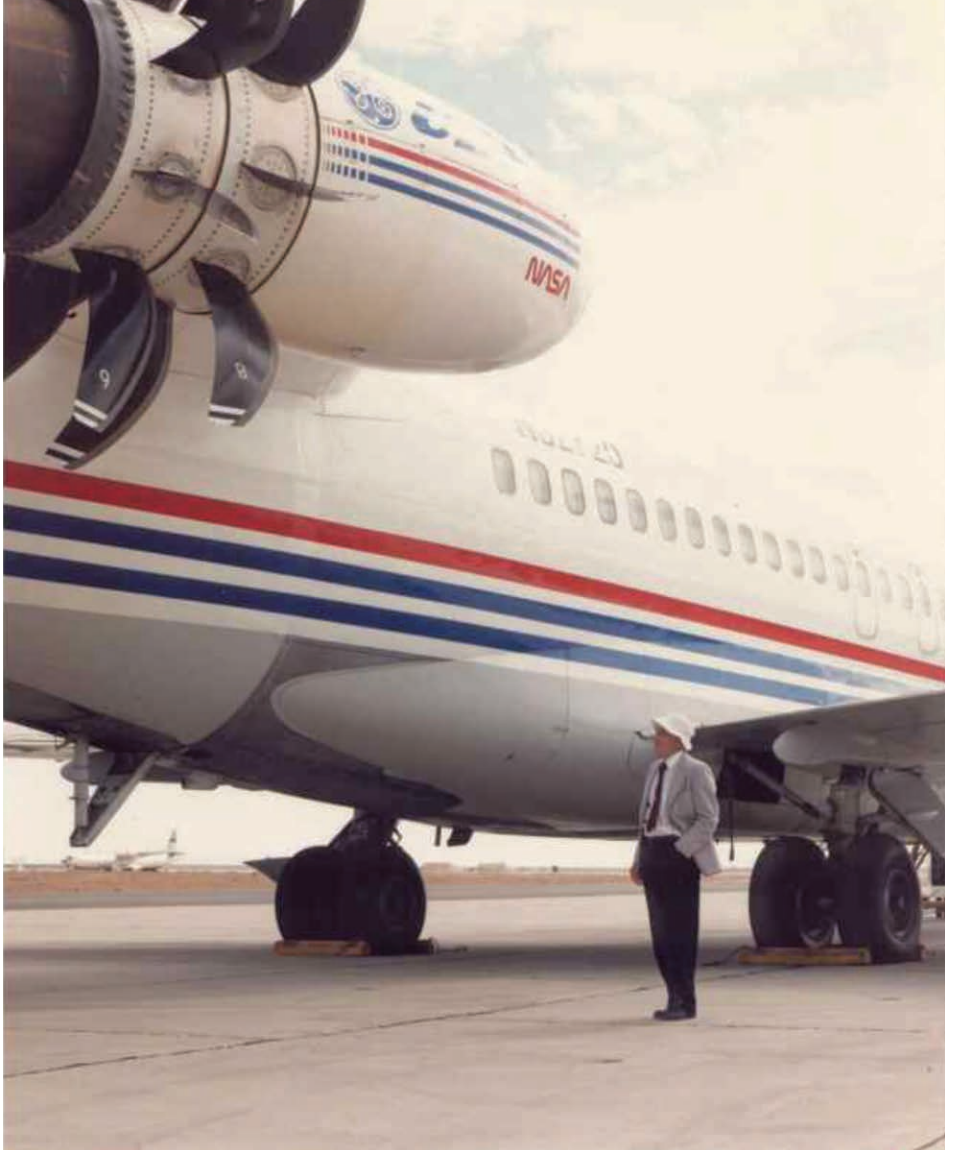
Adamson defines material intelligence as "a deep understanding of the material world around us, an ability to read that material environment, and the know-how required to give it new form."[2] Employing a conversational tone and easy bite-sized chapters, Adamson draws from personal experiences and family lore to explore the ways in which a greater understanding and appreciation for our physical surroundings might enrich our lives and communities. Along the way we are also introduced to a variety of characters, including a material scientist, wood anatomist, several artisans, and Adamson's own grandfather, Arthur, who grew up with the know-how of a Kentucky farm kid and went on to become an actual rocket scientist.

The book suggests that each generation has less traditional material intelligence than the one preceding it because our needed skill sets change. For most people, the objects we interact with every day are less accessible, more complex, and have increasingly more remote origins than ever before. Adamson often begins public presentations by asking his audience what they know about the chair in which they are sitting. Most people have no idea how, where, or by whom it was made. We generally have no practical knowledge of how to answer these questions about industrially manufactured items, leaving us with only a superficial and anonymous relationship to them. In short, today's consumers are surrounded by a language of things that they cannot read, because our attention to objects diminishes as they become widely and cheaply available.

For Adamson, material intelligence is about more than manual dexterity. Rather, it is the judgment and comprehension, accumulated through varied experience with materials and tools, brought to bear on an undertaking. This understanding is not unique to metalsmiths, or crafts practitioners in general, but across all practices in which one can cultivate a mastery of process-based knowledge. What benefits might there be if we were to develop some curiosity about these things?

In *Fewer, Better Things,* the scope of possible impact ranges from the personal to the planetary. Objects themselves are powerful as indelible facts of being. Perhaps this is why many look to artifacts in museums for inviolable truths. Objects and images can be interpreted across languages and cultures. Adamson notes, "When confronted with an opinion you don't agree with, the tendency is to dig in your heels. When confronted with an object you don't at first understand, however, the tendency is more often to become curious."[3] When trying to comprehend someone who is unlike us, perhaps we should begin with trying to understand the physical things they value.

As a result of our waning comprehension, we are losing the ability to access the intelligence that objects hold. Even the knowledge embodied in tools is in danger, the value of tools — that have been designed as an accumulation of experiential intelligence over the history of a craft — is becoming foreign as their use declines. Knowing a tool through use means that you are more prone to recognize the evidence of its use in your surroundings. For example, through the presence of drag marks or planished facets, a metalsmith can generally tell if a vessel was spun on a lathe or raised by hand. These details are invisible to those who do not understand those processes and their tools.



Adamson's grandfather with an airplane featuring a "ductless fan" engine he designed.

Adamson suggests that fostering mutual empathy between makers and users may help span the growing divide in our country between material and digital workers. Historically differentiated as blue collar or white collar, these two groups are knowledge workers of different kinds. Respecting these different forms of knowing may begin to alleviate the class condescension that is so harmful to society. Understanding things will lead to a better understanding of the people who make, design, use, and cherish them.

On the grandest scale, thoughtless production and consumption exacts a toll on the environment. When manufacturers and designers have an informed understanding of the interconnectedness of the people and materials along their supply chain, the impact on the globe during and after an object's creation can be better comprehended and ameliorated. Likewise, when consumers have a better grasp of how a thing is made and what properties it has, it increases the likelihood that it would be mended rather than discarded. People may become empowered to fix things for reuse through material knowledge or by employing uniquely contemporary workarounds made possible through chemical engineering.

Fewer, Better Things challenges us to approach the artifacts of our physical surroundings as though they are precious mysteries to be understood and valued. Adamson's suggestions also raise some problematic questions, such as how do we add to the sum of human knowledge while preserving what we have accumulated thus far in a meaningful way? How can we engage people's curiosity about the things they currently take for granted? To those who create objects that they hope will become prized by others, cherished as gifts, or interpreted in museums, it is even more rewarding to think of them as paths to material understanding for others. The readership of this magazine is rife with makers who are curious about their physical surroundings. While I believe they will enjoy this book, it is the people who walk in a fog of material incomprehension who need it more. Adamson's premise confirms the need for outreach and education through objects in our field and the lasting implications of our success.

Ana M. Lopez is a metalsmith, educator, and decorative arts scholar teaching at the University of North Texas.

1 Sara J. Oshinsky, "European Revivalism," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eurv/hd_eurv.htm / 2 Glenn Adamson, *Fewer, Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 4. / 3 Adamson, *Fewer, Better Things*, 189.

CHICAGO: PAST IS PRESENT

BY COLLEEN TERRELL

One South State Street entrance to the Sullivan Center (also known as the Carson Pirie Scott & Co. Building).

YOU CAN'T TELL THE STORY of contemporary metals and jewelry in Chicago without discussing the past. Chicago's history as an industrial powerhouse continues to inspire the city's creative culture. Nineteenth-century industry—from grain processing to meatpacking to steel manufacturing—formed the backbone of a midwestern economy that remains home to more than ten Fortune 500 companies. Today's residents characterize "Chicagoland" as still very much a working-class, blue-collar city. It's an environment that not only inspires creativity but also fosters a distinctive blend of art and industry that is fundamental to the city's heritage.

The skyscrapers looming above the Chicago River and that form the dense heart of the central commercial district known today as the Loop offer a spectacular union of industry with design. The downtown skyline serves as a daily reminder of how the nineteenth-century architects known as the Chicago School blended design with the possibilities afforded by industrial materials like iron and steel to give the world its first skyscrapers. After fire leveled most of downtown Chicago in 1871, architects flocked to participate in rebuilding the boomtown. High land values forced new thinking about the use of space, ultimately birthing the skeletal steel frame that permitted the skyscrapers' great height. They are a good reminder that innovative work with metal is everywhere in Chicago, if you're looking.

One of the best ways to see Chicago's skyscrapers is from the Chicago River itself. The Chicago Architecture Center, formerly the Chicago Architecture Foundation, offers highly rated riverboat tours of the city's architectural history. As the tours make clear, architectural innovation in metal continues to thrive, evidenced by the undulating exterior of Jeanne Gang's Aqua Tower (2009), or, off the river in Millennium Park, by the brushed stainless-steel ribbons of Frank Gehry's Jay Pritzker Pavilion (2004), a popular destination for free arts performances.

Further monuments of the Chicago School's nineteenth-century architectural metalwork are visible in the elaborate iron stair railings, elevator grilles, and cast ornament that fully express the malleability of metal in sinuous Art Nouveau curves. The central light wells and Oriel staircase of the Rookery, Daniel Burnham and John Wellborn Root's 1888 building, serve as an elaborate paean to

Left:
Jessica Armstrong
Mica Necklace/Removable Brooch #6, 2017
powder coated brass, sterling silver, mica, mica flakes, resin
Photo by Jessica Armstrong

the structural and ornamental possibilities of iron, while Louis Sullivan's 1899 Sullivan Center (also known as the Carson Pirie Scott & Co. building) is famous for its cast-iron façade.[1]

The industrial economy fueling all this building also created a receptive environment for the social and aesthetic ideals of Britain's Arts and Crafts movement, which sparked renewed interest in traditional craft forms and hand-making as a response to industrial production. Just as Chicago's architects gave new creative expression to industrial materials, its Arts and Crafts artisans likewise incorporated modern technologies into their handwrought work, often pragmatically combining hand production with mechanical techniques. The movement gave rise to several specialist metalworking shops, such as the Kalo Shop, the Jarvie Shop, and the Chicago Art Silver Shop, in which metalsmiths made and sold a range of jewelry, flatware, hollowware, trophies, and other decorative objects. The clean, nearly modern lines of these pieces cohere into a distinctively Chicago Arts and Crafts style. Beautiful examples, including a sterling silver candelabra and tableware from the Kalo Shop, can be found in the Chicago History Museum's permanent exhibition *Chicago: Crossroads of America,* as well as in the Art Institute's American Art galleries.

The remarkable confluence of art and industry evident in Chicago's historical metalwork—both artistic and architectural—remains a hallmark of the city's contemporary metalworking culture. Community spaces like the nonprofit Chicago Industrial Arts & Design Center (CIADC), founded by 3D metal artist Matthew Runfola in 2015, offer hands-on education and equipment access for casting and molding, fabrication and forging, woodworking, and computer-aided design. CIADC has a full roster of adult classes, gallery space to showcase members' work, and a thriving teen program. Runfola, who has lived in Chicago since 1998, notes that "Chicago is an absolutely fantastic place for metalworking" precisely because of its continuing history as a manufacturing center. Artists have myriad opportunities to observe and be inspired by industrial processes, like forming through metal spinning, and Runfola lauds the "great network of resources outside of industry that really cater to metalworkers and jewelers, small job shops that are willing to collaborate with artists."

Given the city's history, it's no surprise that sculpture is really big in Chicago, in multiple senses. The city's vibrant sculpture scene is visible in galleries—especially in the River North district, which boasts the highest density of art galleries in the city, including nearly a dozen carrying contemporary 3D work; in the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and in Chicago's public spaces. Chicago has had a local Percent-for-Art program to help fund public art since 1978, but the real turning point came more than a decade earlier, with the 1967 installation of a monumental steel sculpture by Pablo Picasso in what was then known as Civic Center Plaza (now

The Kalo Shop
(manufacturer)
Silver creamer and sugar bowl
circa 1910
sterling silver, stone
2.5 × 5 × 3.25 in.
1975.218a-b; Chicago History Museum

CIADC Metalworking & Forging instructor Sarah Holden forging mild steel.

Courtesy Chicago Industrial Arts & Design Center
Photo by Lucy Lunsford

Daley Plaza). Weighing 162 tons and 50 feet high, it was the first public artwork of its kind in downtown Chicago, and it began to push the city's idea of public art beyond the memorial statue. Today the city has an impressive number of large-scale outdoor sculptures, including Alexander Calder's fifty-three-foot painted steel *Flamingo* (1974) in Federal Center Plaza; Joan Miró's thirty-nine-foot steel, bronze, concrete, and tile *Chicago* (1981), located across the street from the Daley Center, and Anish Kapoor's massive stainless-steel *Cloud Gate* (2004–2006) in Millennium Park, nicknamed "The Bean" and one of Chicago's most recognizable icons.

Sarah Holden, a metalworking and forging instructor at CIADC who is also a sculptor and a jeweler, notes that while Chicago's rich manufacturing history and industrial ecology make the city a "really exciting" place for 3D work, it hasn't nurtured studio jewelry to the same degree. Chicago has technical colleges and certified welding programs aplenty, but its studio jewelry culture thrives in community-oriented spaces, like the well-known Lillstreet Art Center, rather than in degree-seeking academic institutions. Lillstreet has served artists and students since 1975, providing studio and gallery space and instruction in a range of media, including small metals and jewelry.

Lillstreet's year-long competitive artist residencies attract jewelry artists from everywhere, and sometimes they move to Chicago and stay. Jeweler Jessica Armstrong first came to the city in 2015 for a residency at Lillstreet, then continued to teach at the art center afterward, and she is now a new partner and curator at Chicago's go-to gallery for studio jewelry, Pistachios. Founded by Yann Woolley nearly three decades ago, Pistachios showcases art jewelry from more than 100 American and international makers (including Chicago-based Christy Klug, Maura Lenahan, and Armstrong herself) and attracts a global clientele. In jewelry, too, the city can exert its influence on local artists. Holden's work, carried by Lillstreet's gallery, reflects her interest in building, volume, and form, as well as ongoing struggles for civil and gender rights that have profoundly shaped urban areas like Chicago.

Art jewelry routinely blossoms at highly anticipated annual Chicago events such as the Sculpture Objects Functional Art and Design (SOFA) Fair, held each November at the Navy Pier, and the American Craft Exposition. Armstrong, Holden, and Pam Robinson, Director of Lillstreet's Jewelry and Metals Department, all share the sense that Chicago's studio jewelry culture is poised to explode. Several new galleries have either launched recently or are in the works. Many are being founded by artists and designers who gained curatorial experience at Pistachios, like former gallery manager Viviana Langhoff, who opened her own space, Adornment + Theory, in October 2017. Art jewelry may soon be as visible in Chicago's streets and galleries as widely as its famous sculpture.

Chicago, then, is a place both steeped in history and moving forward. It is an eminently appropriate place in which to convene the conference marking SNAG's fiftieth anniversary, under the theme of "The Loop: Coming Full Circle, 50 Years of SNAG." SNAG, too, is honoring its past and laying plans for the future.

Colleen Terrell is a Philadelphia-based freelance writer and craft scholar.

1 Examples of decorative metal panels, elevator grilles, balusters, and other building elements designed by Sullivan and his contemporaries also can be found on display in the Art Institute of Chicago's Architecture and Design Galleries.

Mendocino Art Center

Metals Workshops with an Ocean View

Bette Barnett
Allison Sattinger
Mary Neuer Lee
Kris Patzlaff
Marne Ryan
Nancy Gardner
Pablo Cubangbang
Charles Lewton-Brain
Nanz Aalund
Catherine Dining
Harlan Butt
Sandra Enterline
Marilyn & Jack da Silva
Harold O'Connor

707.937.5818 x10 • 800.653.3328 x10
MendocinoArtCenter.org/jewelry

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METALSMITHING + JEWELRY DESIGN

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SNAG Chicago May 2019

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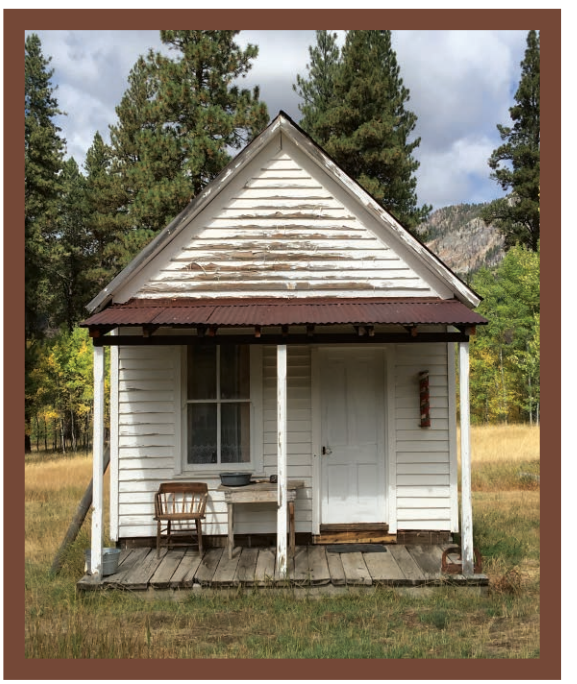
LEARNING FROM ATLANTA



One metalsmith finds inspiration and community in a historic Idaho mountain town.

BY RACHEL REICHERT

Above:
The historic barber shop is often used as lodging and gathering space for The Atlanta School's students and instructors. Courtesy of The Atlanta School, 2018.

I first visited the small mountain town of Atlanta, Idaho, located about forty miles off a paved road in the Sawtooth Wilderness Area, seven years ago. I had heard that some of its residents were restoring the town, using materials salvaged in part from historic structures in Boise that were being torn down to make way for suburbs and strip malls. This stalwart group of restorers had removed structures board by board, painstakingly numbered them, and reassembled them in Atlanta to their original state. As I walked through twenty or so of these shacks, homes, and old businesses, I noticed that the restorers' attention to detail extended to interior spaces as well: all had been completely restored to their original state. Each building served as an installation based on its history, completely functional and furnished with items from the time and story. Needless to say, I was swept off my feet.

In Atlanta, I found a remarkable and strange world that challenged, changed, and influenced my work as a metalsmith and arts administrator. In 2014 I co-founded The Atlanta School, a small art and architecture school, in this curious place. The ambiguity in the beginning of a project like this helped me understand how to listen to the history of a place in order to let it be what it's always been: a living, breathing thing that exists as an open space to make and create.

The Atlanta School's home base is at the bottom of Greylock Mountain, bordered by river, thousands of pine trees, three natural hot springs, and a beautiful mountain range. It is both an experiment and a collaborative project created to establish a dialogue between artists and this small mining town. Through the programs, workshops, and residencies offered, students and instructors maintain an ongoing exchange between their discipline and place. Metalsmiths use structures and found artifacts as a catalyst for learning to saw, file, rivet, solder, cast, and die form. Architects study historic building practices and construct new projects with the community in mind.

Below:
Preservation of historic shacks is an ongoing activity for the residents of Atlanta, Idaho. Often, these shacks house students and instructors. Courtesy of The Atlanta School, 2018.

A seventy-five-year-old saloon acts as student gathering space. Courtesy of The Atlanta School, 2018.

Poets are inspired by staying in and exploring the 150-year-old cabins, their ephemera, the antique quilts.

I'm a trained metalsmith, yet I also work within many other disciplines, including art, preservation, and community engagement. I find myself frequently dwelling in "in-between" spaces. I oversee cultural facilities, arts programs, collections, residencies, and my own studio practice. I get in the weeds over managing an Outlook calendar, brands, contracts, and events. I work with lawyers, accountants, curators, and government officials, all of whom speak different industry languages. I have too many titles, all of which I struggle to identify with.

My interdisciplinary path began through an appreciation and love for architectural restoration, history, and a hunger to always learn more. Even though our first notion as metalsmiths is that our work time must focus solely on growth within our discipline, I've found opportunity in ambivalence and ambiguity. We'd rather put those weekly hours into honing our kinetic skills—our soldering, sanding, and tedious finish work. Instead, I try to find possibility—and even inspiration—in the gaps between my studio work and other disciplines by fostering and nurturing curiosity and fulfilling the quest to contribute to something larger. Building a holistic approach to managing various projects, collaborations, and studio practices makes time spent outside the studio more meaningful and integral. Furthermore, finding ways to learn from seemingly unrelated work and using the studio to process distant disciplines helps build more sustainable practices. Putting down the torch to look ambivalence and ambiguity right in the eyes can lead to unexpected outcomes.

Artists and craftspeople are uniquely equipped with a set of tools. We make. We invent. We find problems and then solve them. These qualities make us competitive as artists, employees, collaborators, and business owners. Keeping this in mind, it is imperative we know that ambivalence and ambiguity (two things that can easily set us back) should act as catalysts for growth, learning, and nurturing our curiosity. Sometimes, these "spaces between" provide us with just what we need—if we participate and engage in something that truly interests us. It may be uncomfortable at times, but learning to speak the industry language of a city planner or an architect or a potential donor makes moving between disciplines easier and more fluid. It can make studio work more focused and result in works exploring new inspiration and infused with fragments of the cross-disciplinary world found outside the studio.

HOW CAN WE REACTIVATE A VANISHING TOWN? HOW CAN WE RE-ESTABLISH ITS USE, BUILD UPON ITS RICH HISTORY AND SENSE OF PLACE, AND SUPPORT ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS—INCLUDING MY OWN COMMUNITY OF METALSMITHS?

When establishing The Atlanta School, my business partner and I asked: How can we reactivate a vanishing town? How can we re-establish its use, build upon its rich history and sense of place, and support artists and architects—including my own community of metalsmiths? How do artists and architects play a role in protecting and preserving Atlanta? We established the school based on answers to these questions. The Atlanta School uses cabins as student housing. We use the original one-room schoolhouse as a gathering and education space, and old saloons as spaces for group meals and

Finding inspiration from projects outside the studio, Reichert pulls from small details, shapes, and construction methods found at the James Castle House in Boise, Idaho. Courtesy of Boise City Department of Arts & History, 2016. Photo by Rachel Reichert, 2018.

further discussion. Classes are intended to juxtapose and integrate elements of multiple disciplines.

When I first stayed in the historic Pierce cabin, I imagined the family who built it, and the many other individuals who occupied it over the past century and a half. Ira Pierce and his family traveled the Oregon Trail bound for the West Coast in 1863. Their rest stop in Boise—then a tent city—turned into a permanent stay. Using lumber hauled by a team of oxen, the family built a small one-room cabin that sheltered them for years. After the Pierce family left, the cabin became a blacksmith shop, a jail, and a home to other families. In 2006, my business partner took ownership of the humble cabin, deconstructed it board by board, numbered them, and reconstructed it on Quartz Street in Atlanta. This cabin is now used by The Atlanta School as a space for students and instructors. The narrative of the Pierce cabin, its endurance and mixed use, has become the perfect symbol for the school.

Stories like that of the Ira Pierce cabin, and the small details found inside Atlanta's spaces such as old boot marks, nail holes, and the tarnished brass doorknobs left behind by previous tenants, act as a jumping-off place for students and instructors in making new work. Recently a small group of novice student metalsmiths used the town's history and six historic structures as inspiration for learning new skills. Wallpaper patterns, construction methods, and quilting techniques provided design direction for developing patterns and textures on metal. The cobalt blue patterns on the white ironstone dishes, and the etchings found on the antique flatware, helped inspire students.

There's something that happens in a place that feels timeless. You notice that everything around you works—and has worked for over a hundred years—without electricity. After a couple of days, you realize that the hand broom has been used by someone right-handed for decades. You prefer to warm yourself with fire in a stove and fall asleep to its crackle. Timelessness. One could argue that "good work" could also be described as timeless. The time to allow myself to engage with the what, how, and why I create under the pretense of timelessness, conscious or subconscious, inspires me and my work.

My studio practice is how I process undefined and unclear projects and make concrete observations. Building fragments of my day and sections of my conversations out of metal helps me process non-studio-based work. I merge vastly different disciplines and distill the essence of a building, or an abstracted idea into jewelry and small sculptures. These metal pieces become tangible objects resulting from my ambiguous and ambivalent work outside the studio. The aesthetics of my world in Atlanta are found throughout my studio practice. The corner of a room or the interior framing of a small historic shack are now wearable ideas, translated and locked in metal. Both of these passions—for metalsmithing and the intrigues of a place like Atlanta, Idaho—bleed into my professional work.

I oversee another project in addition to The Atlanta School, as manager of the City of Boise's Cultural Sites program. The James Castle House is a city-funded cultural center and was home to American artist James Castle.[1] Under this program it offers residency programs, exhibitions, retail, and a growing collection of art and artifacts. In 2015, with a team of architects, historians, and engineers, we kicked off the preservation and construction of the house, a monumental project for which I found myself project lead. After the site work was completed, I moved into the role of managing both the center and its programs. One doesn't have to look hard to see the parallels in my work.

GOLD WAS FIRST DISCOVERED IN ATLANTA IN 1863. ATLANTA WAS ALIVE AT THIS TIME.

Rachel Reichert in her studio.

Students learn basic metalsmithing skills, pulling from the town of Atlanta, Idaho, as inspiration in the creation of textures and shapes.
Courtesy of The Atlanta School, 2018.

A place-based performance by The Atlanta School Artists-in-Residence Elizabeth Ardent and Emma Vaughn held at a nearby abandoned mining site. Courtesy of The Atlanta School, 2016.

Having seen the James Castle House through all stages of its rehabilitation and program development, I found myself drawn to its construction methods and the materials used when the family built the house. I recognized the stories the house told about the family and farmland that is now a residential neighborhood in Boise. I found myself drawn to the vernacular architecture built out of necessity and with the sometimes-makeshift materials at hand at the time. I found the odd angles and shapes visually stunning, and I quickly let this interest influence my metalwork. An exterior wall merging with a roofline, interior stud framing, or shed trusses become more inspiration for silver brooches and necklaces. I've created a tangible and wearable collection based on sections of the James Castle House.

I have found the connective tissue and the language for the spaces between all of these loosely related endeavors. These partnerships and collaborations allow me to leapfrog between a studio practice and other projects. The lines between my projects and studio practice blur, making everything an extension of the next. My time spent exploring the stories of places, learning from historians, archivists, and preservationists, providing space for other artists, saving and activating spaces, and developing community programming and partnerships feeds my studio work. I pull directly from the aesthetics, patterns, shapes, and construction methods of spaces and the communities I'm in. Deconstructing and reconstructing 163-year-old structures, researching wallpaper and artifacts, and participating in conversations with poets, artists, architects, and others on my team have all acted as my muse.

Now in its fifth year, The Atlanta School has found its voice. It has become, much like the space it occupies, a life force of its own. In many ways the town and its history inform the school; they also inform our students and instructors, allowing them to enter a dialogue that spans decades, generations, skills, and disciplines. The first five years were about putting down roots. The next five years will likely be about protecting and preserving the fragile and volatile physical and conceptual spaces we have built. Even though we work towards saving this small town, we are also stewards of its future, knowing that every decision we make leaves a mark for the next person to discover.

Gold was first discovered in Atlanta in 1863. Atlanta was alive at this time. Over the years, it's witnessed gold rushes, fires, engineering feats, triumphs, misfortune, tragedy, abandonment, and now, rebirth. Its rebirth began long before The Atlanta School. It was saved by its residents, which is why it holds so much power and beauty. Its collective history offers a sense of place, stillness, and the most spectacular night sky. Many structures still are on the brink of ruin. Students and instructors infuse life back into the once-abandoned shacks, saloons, outbuildings, and barns. In return, the place offers untethered creative space for experimentation and exploration. The very limited electricity, lack of WiFi, unlikely location, and even more unlikely collection of local personalities have made this 153-year-old mining town a perfect backdrop for cross-disciplinary exploration. The long journey to Atlanta now acts as a shedding-of-skin ritual as I drive closer. The relationships I've made, the conversations I've had, and the things I've seen, heard, tasted, and learned have shaped the artist I am today.

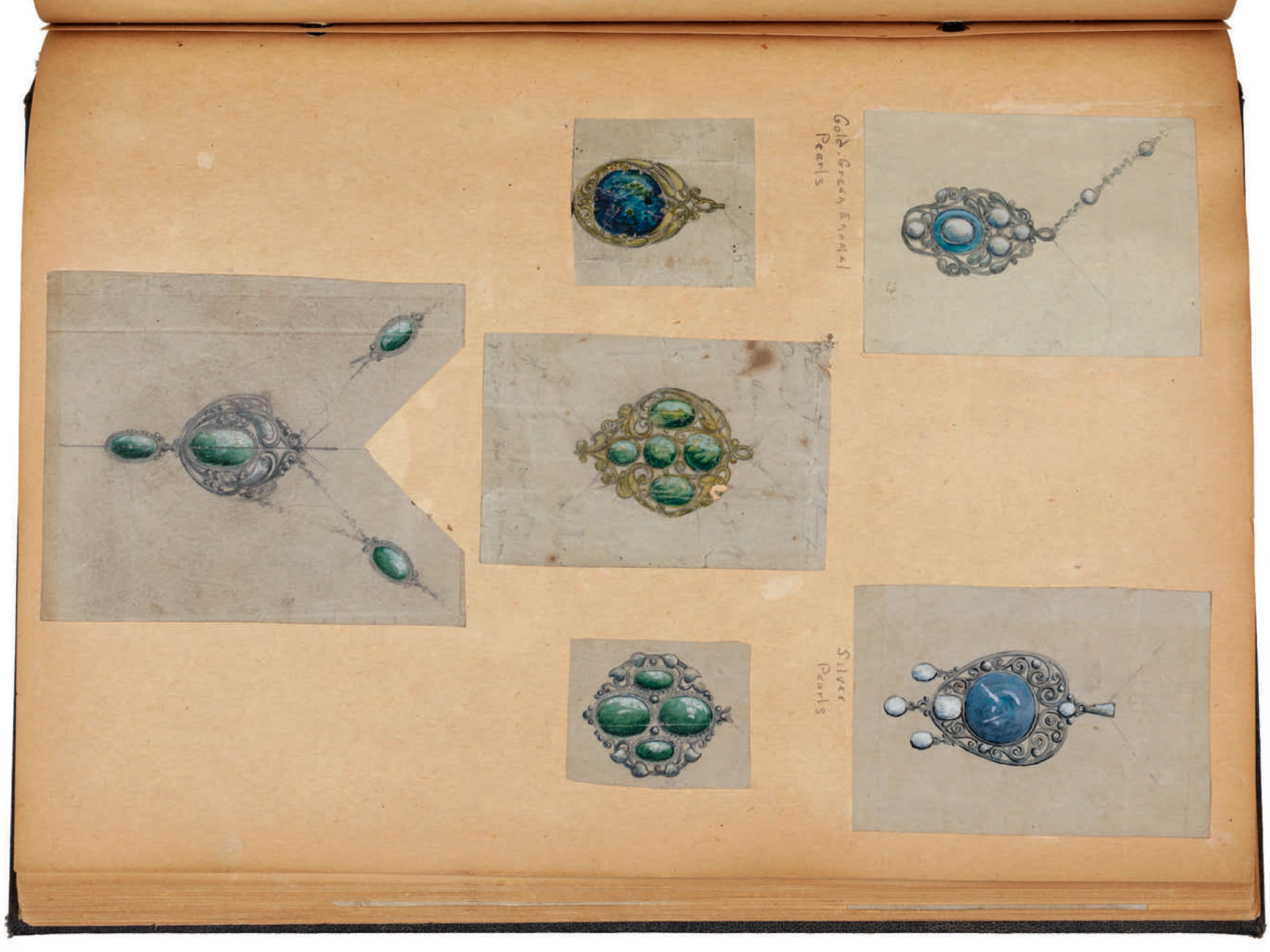
An Idaho native, Rachel Reichert manages Studio Reichert, where she develops one-of-a-kind art objects, teaches, and consults for individuals and organizations that aspire to connect more authentically with the people and places they surround.

www.studioreichert.com
www.theatlantaschool.org
www.jamescastlehouse.org

1 James Castle (1899–1977) was a self-taught American artist, born deaf in Garden Valley, Idaho. Castle is best known for using soot and spit in the creation of drawings, assemblages, and handmade books. His work can be found in many galleries, museums, and private collections throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia.

THE ARCHIVE OF

Frank Gardner Hale: Designer – Artist Jeweler – Enamellist



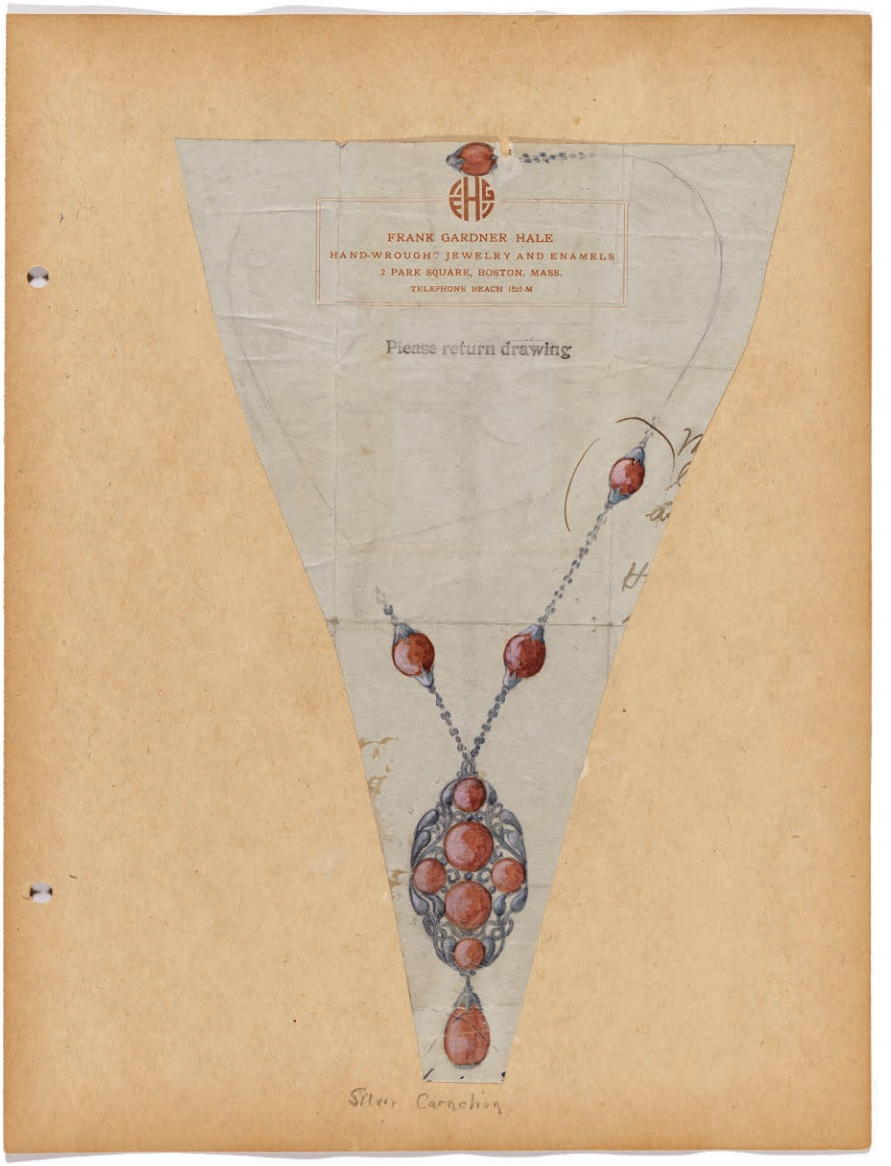
Understanding an American Arts and Crafts master and his world through sketchbooks, diaries, letters, photographs, and drawings.

BY MEGHAN MELVIN

When the public encounters a work of art in a museum, it is rarely accompanied by all of the materials that allow curators to understand its significance. Design drawings, working notes, correspondence, contemporary reportage: ephemeral archival information of this kind supports an interpretation that is more nuanced, contextual, and engaging, as it extends beyond the object's physical properties. Archival material helps inform curators, collectors, and scholars about an artist's motivations and working methods. This research allows for more authentic representation, particularly in the context of a museum display.

Process materials can also help curators better understand how to care for a work of art. With metalwork and jewelry in particular, in-depth knowledge of materials and techniques can be critical to understanding how a piece was crafted, which in turn aids in its long-term preservation. For artists who do not mark their pieces, or whose mark has been erased with use over time, written or photographic documentation is crucial for later identification and correct attribution.

The acquisition by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston of the archive of jeweler and enamellist Frank Gardner Hale in 2014 inspired the new exhibition *Boston Made: Arts and Crafts Jewelry and Metalwork,* on view until March 19, 2020. The exhibition focuses on the vibrant metalworking and jewelry community in Boston in the early decades of the twentieth century. A related publication, *Arts and Crafts Jewelry in Boston: Frank Gardner Hale and His Circle,* highlights Hale's central role in this community. Featuring more than seventy-five works made between 1900 and 1930 by fourteen artists (nine women and five men), *Boston Made* includes jewelry, tableware, decorative accessories, and design drawings, many drawn from private collections. Shown together, as they would have been at the time of their creation, the works invite visitors to explore the philosophy and artistry of the Arts and Crafts movement in Boston, as well as the stories of their makers.



Above:
Frank Gardner Hale
Design for a carnelian necklace
graphite, watercolor
Frank Gardner Hale Archive, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum purchase with funds donated by Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf, an anonymous donor, and John Lowell Gardner Fund
Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Previous spread:
Frank Gardner Hale
Designs for jewelry
graphite, watercolor
Frank Gardner Hale Archive, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum purchase with funds donated by Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf, an anonymous donor, and John Lowell Gardner Fund
Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Espousing the beliefs of the international Arts and Crafts philosophy, Boston's interwoven group of craftspeople—women and men, New England natives and immigrants, makers from both struggling and affluent backgrounds, and solo practitioners and larger workshops—favored an aesthetic that set their work apart at the time. Their jewelry was noted, then as now, for its strong design and handcraftsmanship, as well as for its colorful and precious—even showy—materials. A 1905 chalice ornamented with a broad array of different gemstones, designed by architect R. Clipston Sturgis and crafted by prominent silversmith Arthur Stone in memory of fellow artist Sarah Wyman Whitman, embodies the cooperative spirit of this tight-knit artistic community.

Today Hale (1876–1945) is best remembered as a leading figure in the development of Boston's Arts and Crafts community of artist jewelers and enamellists.[1] His jewelry is admired for its eye-catching use of bold color and mixed materials set in balanced, foliate designs. Hale's accomplishments as a highly skilled pictorial enamellist, as seen in works like a peacock rendered in jewel-like tones, are receiving renewed attention, having fallen out of the public eye for decades, likely as a result of changing tastes following the Second World War.

As Hale considered himself a jeweler and enamellist in equal measure, and exhibited both media throughout his career, it is curious that the Hale archive should contain relatively little information on his enamels. The depth of the archive at the MFA, Boston, which includes hundreds of pencil and watercolor sketches, photographs, lecture notes, correspondence, and related ephemera, has confirmed how prolific a jeweler Hale was. Contemporary exhibition reviews often described displays of more than 100 pieces of jewelry, but only several dozen examples of Hale's jewelry are known publicly today. Matching Hale's known jewelry to these sketches and photographs has clarified that the archive, while not complete, is certainly comprehensive.

Originally from Connecticut, Hale was first educated in art and design at the Norwich School of Art, followed by a year of study at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA) from 1896 to 1897. His professional career began in graphic design, creating sheet music covers and other decorative elements for local publishers and periodicals. Following

Frank Gardner Hale
Peacock plaque
enamel (basse-taille) on copper
Collection of Boice Lydell
Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

R. Clipston Sturgis (designer),
Arthur Stone (maker)
Sarah Wyman Whitman Memorial Chalice, 1905
gold-plated silver, alexandrite chrysoberyl, sapphire, tourmaline, cat's eye chrysoberyl, citrine quartz, spinel, pyrope garnet, grossular garnet (hessonite), pink sapphire, yellow sapphire
Collection of Trinity Church, Boston
Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Hale's jewelry is admired for its eye-catching use of bold color and mixed materials set in balanced, foliate designs.

Frederick Partridge
Necklace
gold, moonstone, enamel, glass
Private Collection
Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Like many of his contemporaries, Partridge often featured moonstone and enamel in his fine jewelry. The archive reveals that Hale favored this combination of materials too.

From hasty sketches to precise delineation of proportions and materials, the range of Hale's drawings reveals much about his process.

his studies, Hale remained active in the local student arts community, and exhibited his design work beyond Boston, including at a Minneapolis exhibition of arts and crafts in 1901.[2] Hale's archive has not revealed what, or who, sparked his desire to study metalsmithing abroad and to pursue a career as a craftsman jeweler. However, contemporary reviews as well as his lecture notes in the archive make clear that Hale longed for independent recognition as an artist, and was no longer content to work behind the scenes as a relatively anonymous graphic designer. As an astute young artist, Hale would likely have been aware of some of the criticism expressed by the jury of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, who lamented the absence of high-quality, handwrought jewelry in reviews of their first exhibitions dedicated to jewelry and enamels.[3]

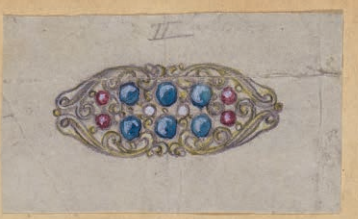
Largely as a result of the absence of local opportunities for formal training in metalsmithing, Hale set off for England in the spring of 1906, having arranged a stay of several months at Charles Robert Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft in Chipping Campden. Hale's diaries of his travels abroad reveal much about his ambition and abilities, which included photography—a skill that would serve him particularly well at the start of his career as a craftsman jeweler in Boston.[4] His residency at the Guild of Handicraft began with a stint in the metalworking shop, followed by a month of nearly one-on-one instruction in enamels. Hale arrived at the Guild with some rudimentary handworking skills, and was given traditional beginners' tasks of hammering up bowls of copper before he was able to work with silver.[5] By the time he left a few months later, some of his pieces were purchased by the Guild for retail in their own shop, suggesting advanced competence for someone new to the craft. Hale enjoyed learning how to enamel and spent long days practicing this new art form, to the point that he "nearly melted working with the intense heat of the furnace."[6]

Hale's course of training at the Guild of Handicraft was pre-arranged, but he also took advantage of every opportunity to absorb the latest in contemporary design and craft at retail exhibitions and school displays in London, as well as studying historic art and architecture. His writing makes clear that he had envisioned securing a training spot with a jeweler in Europe after his time in Chipping Campden. While on an extended European vacation, he made inquiries with independent jewelers, as well as larger commercial enterprises, in both Switzerland and France, but was unsuccessful. He returned to London and was fortunate to secure an apprenticeship of sorts with former Guild member Fred Partridge and his wife May, also a gifted artist and enamellist. Given the strong influence of the English Arts and Crafts communities on Boston, it is interesting to consider what Hale's jewelry, and ultimately that of his contemporaries, might have looked like had he spent months training in Paris rather than London. Having concentrated on metalworking and enameling at the Guild,

Opposite:
Frank Gardner Hale
Designs for brooches
graphite, watercolor
Frank Gardner Hale Archive, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum purchase with funds donated by Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf, an anonymous donor, and John Lowell Gardner Fund
Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

This page from one of the Hale scrapbooks features one of his most celebrated designs for a gem-set enameled brooch in the form of a peacock, closely inspired by a piece designed by his mentor C.R. Ashbee.

Gold Brooch
6 Sapphires
4 Rubies
2 diamonds



12 rubies
& diamonds
1 large pearl
& sapphires

Carved from solid
piece gold
enameled
Pink Tourmaline (body)
Large Sapphire
7 small "
9 Amethysts
7 Green tourmalines
13 Pearls
5 Rubies

Frank Gardner Hale
Photographs of buckles and brooches
albumen print, hand-tinted
Frank Gardner Hale Archive, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum purchase with funds donated by Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf, an anonymous donor, and John Lowell Gardner Fund
Photo ©Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The hand-tinted central buckle reveals the lengths Hale went to capture his work through photography. Close examination of the image suggests that he cut out one of his designs on paper, pinned it up for photography, and then hand-tinted his photograph.

Hale found his time with the Partridges devoted exclusively to making jewelry, and he began his first brooch within a week or two. Part of Hale's training included regular excursions to purchase materials and tools, including visiting a dental manufacturer to obtain silver and gold solders.[7] When Hale returned to Boston in 1907, he brought a range of supplies with him to set up his workshop.

To date, the Hale Archive at the MFA has helped scholars better understand how Hale worked as an artist, and how he succeeded in promoting his work as an individual while actively supporting the mission of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston. Hale was self-aware and diligent in his dedication to his craft. He documented his work from the time he began his training in England, as revealed by his own photographs of his pieces made at the Guild of Handicraft. Hale was able to use his images to promote his pieces in publications, and therefore was not solely dependent on exhibitions or visitors to his studio, in cultivating a broader audience. The archive also reveals that he was highly detail-oriented, and consistent in his focus and dedication to Arts and Crafts principles, which included the recognition of a craftsperson's individual and independent identity. Even his early commercial graphic designs often include his name or initials, artfully concealed in a dense composition. Hale was diligent in marking his jewelry and enamels, but not all pieces are signed. There wasn't always adequate space to mark smaller pieces, or the marks have worn off with use over time. The archive will prove to be a useful tool in attributing unmarked pieces to Hale in the future, in particular less dramatic pieces such as the simple brooches or cufflinks that were undoubtedly a mainstay of his workshop.

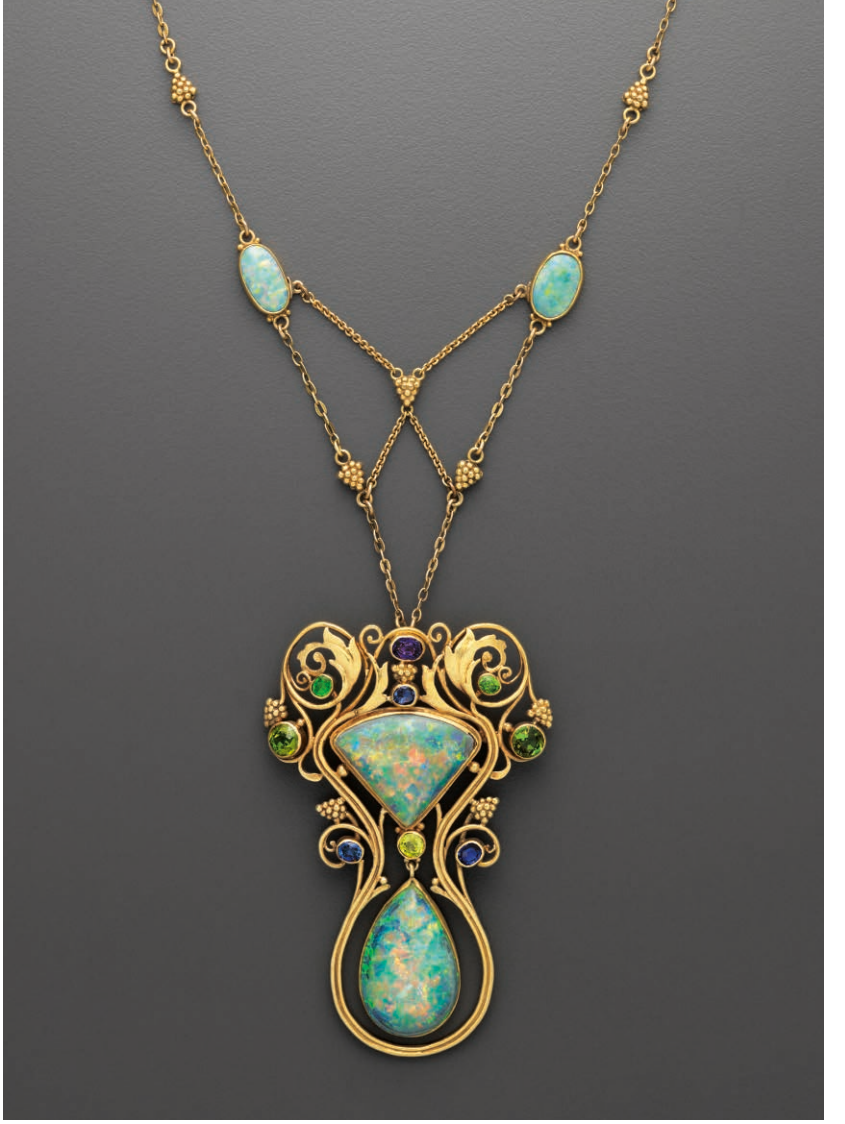
As a highly skilled draftsperson with extensive experience in graphic design, Hale considered drawing a vital component of artistic practice. From hasty sketches to precise delineation of proportions and materials, the range of Hale's drawings reveals much about his process. Some drawings were likely used as reference tools by the handful of apprentices he employed over time, including the acclaimed jeweler and silversmith Edward Everett Oakes, who went on to work with Josephine Hartwell Shaw before setting up his own workshop. Some of the most complete designs were created for Hale's clients; these were often executed directly on his letterhead, which

helped promote the artist's name and his designs. Hale often presented a selection of designs that were variations on a theme, offering different arrangements of a fixed group of stones, presumably selected in consultation with a client. Hale's work was retailed in stamped custom boxes that he designed with his wife Julia (Julie) Dwight Hale, who undoubtedly played a significant role in her husband's professional success. Much more work needs to be done to uncover her many contributions, both as a businesswoman and artist.

A great deal beyond the scope of Hale's practice as a leading maker within Boston's Arts and Crafts community remains to be learned from his archive. His lifelong commitment to documenting his work was also recognized by members of Hale's extended family. Many of his artifacts are now preserved at several cultural institutions at which he had close personal connections.[9] As artists and institutions continue to promote the value of the creative process and its documentation more fully, the representation of artists and their work will become ever more holistic and authentic. Artists' archives can reveal much about the past, but they can also guide us in the present day, united by a shared and enduring desire to embody beauty and truth through craftsmanship.

Meghan Melvin is the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Curator of Design at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She is also the co-curator of Boston Made: Arts and Crafts Jewelry and Metalwork *(November 17, 2018–March 19, 2020) and co-author of* Arts and Crafts Jewelry in Boston: Frank Gardner Hale and His Circle *(2018, MFA Publications).*

1 In his notes for an undated lecture, likely from the 1920s, entitled *Good Taste in Craftsmanship and the Craftsman's Place in a Changing World,* Hale wrote that "I feel that the Arts and Crafts are a permanent, personal expression in a material form, of one's emotional and intellectual life, and they must vary in expression with the ability, and experience of the creator." / **2** Charlotte Whitcomb, *Brush and Pencil 7,* no. 6 (March 1901): 352. / **3** Report of the Society of the Arts and Crafts, Boston on the year 1905. / **4** Four of Frank Gardner Hale's travel diaries are in the archive of the Marblehead Arts Association (MAA). / **5** MAA Diary, entry for May 30, 1906. / **6** MAA Diary, entry for July 27, 1906. / **7** MAA Diary, entry for November 5, 1906. / **8** Upon his return from England, Hale was honored to join the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston (SACB) as a Master, and served on numerous committees, as well as the jury, for many years. He was also Dean of the SACB Jewelers' Guild formed in 1918. Hale also actively supported the arts in Marblehead, Massachusetts, where he summered for many years. / **9** In addition to the MFA and the MAA, the Slater Memorial Museum in Norwich, Connecticut, also holds works of archival material, as well as some works of art, by Frank Gardner Hale.



Frank Gardner Hale
Necklace
gold, green garnet, sapphire, opal
The Susan Donald Collection
Photo ©Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

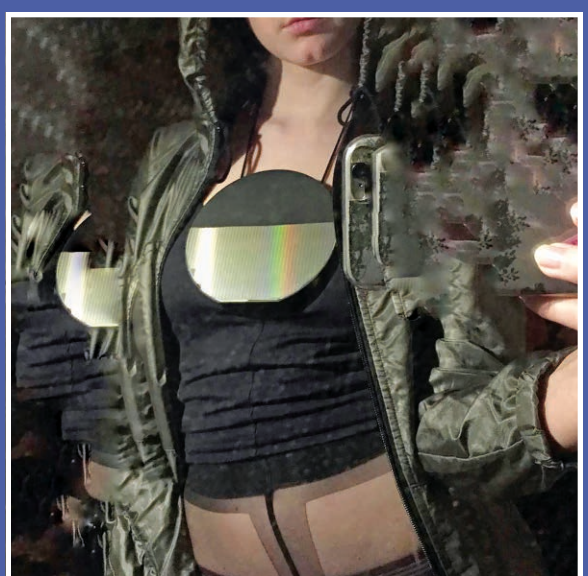
Hale's sensitivity to color and design is evident in this pendant featuring two dramatic opals complemented by sapphire and green garnet. The subtle differences between the original design and the finished necklace convey some aspects of the artist's working process.

Jeweled scroll brooch
gold, zircon, diamond, sapphire, peridot
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gift of Joseph B. and Edith Alpers
Photo ©Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

With many of Hale's pieces of jewelry, an array of gemstones, carefully selected for their color, shape and size, appears to determine the form of the decorative setting.

Darja Poplitova
Selfie with *Narcissus I* brooch, 2017
plastic, silver, steel
modelled, 3D-scanned, CNC-milled,
vacuum formed, chromed

Darja Poplitova
Selfie with *Body Trigger* pendant, 2017
rubber, lab glass, silver, textile



Darja Poplitova
Selfies with *Fazis IV* pendant, 2015
rubber, gold-plated silver,
fire obsidian

Darja Poplitova
Selfie with *Metanoia VI* brooch, 2015
stabilized wood, silver, steel

-White Cube / +White T-Shirt: Context Via Image and Today's Cult Jewelers

BY KELLIE RIGGS

Darja Poplitova
Selfie with *Full Moon Mantra* neckpiece, 2017
rubber, silicon wafer, textile, silver neckpiece

Opposite:
Ada Chen
Speak English, We're in America, 2017
fine silver grillz and earring-necklace
Photo:
Daniel Terna

JEWELRY IN THE WHITE CUBE

Glossy and white. No shadows. A strange sculpture (?) is sitting center frame in the depthless photograph. How big is the object? *What* is it? It's curious, ambiguous. Oh, it's a piece of jewelry!

These conventions govern how most jewelry has been photographed and represented over the last four decades. But why? Because this jewelry is art!

But this was new jewelry; beyond jewelry. It was intellectual, not fashion, nor accessory. There were shifts in scale, performances, stand-alone masterpieces, and wild materials. It was (seemingly) ready for its own market. And it needed a home. The contextless photograph was an extension of the sacred white cube that we created for these objects, in our simulation of the art world: pure spaces where the gallerist played mediator between this craft-based art form and its future collector. It was going to be amazing. One prominent Dutch gallery owner even told me in a 2012 interview, "We thought we were going to take over the world."[1] And it was amazing, but only known to a very select—read small—international audience. The evolution of Contemporary Jewelry Academia followed: global MFA programs groomed future masters who would be included in international exhibitions, their work shown on white pedestals, under glass, as artifacts in museums. Shows about commonality in material, geographies, artists' alma maters, jewelry's "unleashed" personality, or with no theme at all: just to show we were just so happy this stuff exists!

I've chosen to telescope this history to illustrate a single, perhaps even controversial, paradox: The pursuit to exalt this special kind of jewelry to an elite art status has consequently distanced it from its very nature, which is—drumroll, please—jewelry. Jewelry is meant to be worn, right? So where did the body go? No, not the physical body, but the cultural body, the spiritual body, the social body; identity, real or imagined. What are the contexts that this jewelry ought to participate in? What societal frameworks surround the circumstances in which it was made? Who is the artist? And more importantly, who is the jewelry for? These questions are beginning to be answered by a new generation of contemporary jewelers. It's actually a rather easy fix, in line with the zeitgeist of our digital age.

CONTEXT THROUGH IMAGE

As they no longer believe in the idea that jewelry relegated to the white space of the gallery can speak for itself, younger artists tend to create environments in which their work lives up to wild fantasies, painting bigger, more experiential pictures of the scenes and subcultures surrounding such fun and unique objects. This evolution is leading to a new attitude in contemporary jewelry, one that is far more reflective of the psyche and individuality of the creator—and the hopeful wearer—than the field has seen before. This shift didn't happen overnight. For example, there has been a trend toward more classical, archetypal jewelry pieces, like the signet ring—but with a twist. It signifies a resistance to the "Jewelry can be anything!" attitude of our former teachers (and no disrespect!). It's a return to the idea of *wearing* as the ultimate destination of a piece, rather than life in a drawer or under glass. The lack of galleries that can accommodate the surge of exiting jewelry students; a growing generational divide between artists and collectors; the perils of today's global gig economy; and the rise in social media marketing all encourage self-promotion directly to the ideal audience, using image-based frameworks.

Let's try calling the field a subculture.[2] It makes perfect sense, as artists have increasingly been cultivating their own "scenes" around their objects. Take the growing popularity of Munich Jewellery Week.[3] Every year in March, international jewelers descend on the city with their own exhibitions and alternative presentation formats. In 2016, *American Gothic,* an inclusive and participatory artist-run show curated by Steven Gordon Holman, offered a photo-worthy hangout that presented the work of six American artists dealing with youth culture and low-brow/high-brow aesthetics.[4] The jewelry that hung on the walls was in no way outshone by

Younger artists tend to create environments in which their work lives up to wild fantasies, painting bigger, more experimental pictures of their scenes and subcultures.

the (nicely designed) beer-pong setup in the middle of the small gallery, nor by the eighteen-foot, black inflatable tube man dancer (you know, the kind you see at used car lots) doing its thing outside. It might sound tacky, and some might have thought it was (I didn't). The point was that it was unpretentious and fun, joyfully, and ever so slightly self-deprecatingly, synthesizing—for the most part—uniquely American tendencies in material, making, and attitude. It was hip, and nothing was out of place.

American Gothic was the jewelry underground manifested. You felt something being there, being let in. The jewelry became part of a greater scene, and spoke of the subcultural spirit the artists had created, and a means by which you could carry that feeling away with you into your everyday life. It was cult. But it was also only in Munich. Luckily, this exclusive (read invisible) cult-jewelry subculture is extending beyond these kinds of temporary spaces and entering the social and digital ethers that command our everyday lives more "permanently," opening itself up to be discovered by whoever, whenever. Naturally, it is the field's up-and-coming jewelers who are taking the lead, redefining what it means to create a "professional" jewelry photograph.

CLAIMING CULTURE

As a recent Pratt graduate, Chinese-American artist Ada Chen is perhaps the youngest image innovator worth highlighting. Her success is in large part a result of the timely and relatable subject matter of her work. Chen's thesis project, *Made in Chinese America,* featured pieces that playfully addressed racial stereotypes that she faces on a day-to-day basis. Through carefully directed photography and digital collaging, posted on her Instagram (@potadachen) the work truly came alive. Chen's framework pointedly communicated her intent and made the jewelry accessible. *Speak English, We're in America* (2018) is comprised of a silver grill with engraved Chinese characters,[5] and a chain that hooks to both earlobes bearing its title in cursive. The full impact hits in an image of Chen unabashedly wearing both pieces. Early in her studies, Chen had an epiphany: "All my black friends at Pratt seemed to have their identities figured out. I asked myself, how come I'm not the same way? Why am I not proud?"[6] She realized photography might help her.

Although Chen had just graduated, an image of her *Text Message Earrings* (2018) was posted—and reposted, and reposted across social media and the web. As she says, "My earrings had become

Are you Asian or Chinese?
Are you Asian or Chinese?
Im chinese but chinese is a type asian so
You just came from China?
No I was born Inat
Dope dope
I've never been with an asian girl before
And how do you feel about that?
I dont know Im kinda excited
You just came from China?
No I was born Inat
Dope dope

Left:
Ada Chen
Text Message Earrings, 2018
laser-cut acrylic and sterling silver
Photo:
Jonell Joshua

Right:
Kalkidan Hoex
TheNEWTribe
Photo:
Ginger Bloemen
Model:
Britney Wijurume

a meme." As a result of the overwhelming response, Chen reproduced and sold the mismatched pair of colorful plastic earrings, each side featuring a transcription of text message exchanges with various men who viewed her identity through the lens of sexual fetish. The piece got a lot of press, including attention from outlets as varied as i-D, the Fader, and Refinery 29. Chen figures that she garnered popular and media attention "because I've used a medium that people don't usually use to talk about identity," she says; the primary medium being jewelry, that is, and Instagram—or imagemaking—as her secondary mode of working. Social media is a great way to gauge accessibility and appeal. Three months after Chen's graduation, her Instagram account had grown to more than 12,400 followers. Can we call that a cult following? Pretty good for the jewelry underground.

In the Netherlands, Kalkidan Hoex (Instagram:@_____k.t.h._____), a recent graduate of the Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design, is also using jewelry and image to consider questions of personal identity and relatability. Born in Ethiopia but adopted as a baby, she says, "I've always felt like I lived in between two worlds. I was never really a Dutch girl. I looked different on the outside than others. But I also had a preference for different sorts of music, drawings, style, objects, and so on, even though I am not really Ethiopian either."[7]

Hoex's graduation collection of casted silver rings and colorful pendants made of found materials was thus named "TheNEWTribe," and wouldn't have been complete without the dynamic, illustrative images she created for the jewelry, sometimes using stop-motion photography. The pieces, which depart from the aesthetics and functions of African tribal masks, speak to not quite belonging to one place or another. "This way of speaking with faces seemed like an interesting concept to me," Hoex says. "I could see a connection to how we, in the Western world, communicate in the same way. We use emoticons with all different expressions to communicate with others every day."[8] The overall result, she says, is to pull two worlds together and create one that she—and others like her—fit into. The cultural body is very present in Hoex's images, and the vibe is energetic, cool, and fashionable: all elements that the artist feels are lacking in the restrictive white cube of the established contemporary jewelry world. Instead, the overall image Hoex has cultivated for herself is far more viable for the limitless arenas of digital consumption. What Chen and Hoex prove is that subcultural jewelry can gain more mainstream traction than we might expect. Internet platforms provide young creatives with ways to create whatever kind of environment they deem appropriate for their physical work, no matter how fantastical or otherworldly.

JEWELRY AS PROPOSITION

Estonian artist Darja Popolitova fills her Instagram page (@darja_popolitova) with sensual, digitalized self-portraits featuring

Opposite:
Kalkidan Hoex
TheNEWTribe
Photo: Ginger Bloemen
Models: Britney Wijurume And
Insta: @s.t.p.h.n.

Darja Poplitova
Selfie with *Narcissus II*
brooch, 2017
plastic, silver, steel
modelled & 3D scanned, CNC
milled, vacuum formed,
chromed

her jewelry, taken in mirrored spaces. The photos are more than just selfies—which, despite their ubiquity, can be a radical format.[9] Popolitova's work also talks about image and culture, but more generationally; specifically, growing up alongside the nascent Internet. By presenting pictures with her jewelry on her own body, she's walking up to the line between self-(re)presentation and what she calls digital narcissism that exists in many of the "alluring personalities found on social media." "I wear jewelry for my digital identity," says Popolitova. "I don't wear it so much in real life. Maybe because I do it in my head all the time… A friend of mine expressed it very well: 'I am hot only online.'"[10]

A lot of millennials feel this way, so there's a strange level of comfort involved in such transparent self-awareness. By taking pictures of the finished jewelry on her body, Popolitova not only gains a clearer understanding of her work; she *becomes* the work. The artist states:

> [The work] starts functioning not only as real material objects, but pictures floating online via likes and shares can even become autonomous [artworks]. Through this process, the informativeness of jewelry is distorted. What is it changing into? Into a hint, a mood, an emotion, I suppose.[11]

The jewelry becomes hyper-real, just like the digital avatars millennials are constantly creating and projecting to the world. Perhaps it has become merely a proposition: How can jewelry help us become our truest, maximal selves?

What emerging talents like Chen, Hoex, and Popolitova prove is that younger artists care less about institutional or academic hierarchies in the field. The right image creation and social media presence replaces the need for a middleman to get their work out into the world. It also levels the playing field between "art jewelry" and more commercial jewelry, which all of these artists deem necessary. They are mixing it all up; the Internet doesn't care about those categories anyhow. Popolitova's stance seems correct: "It feels like jewelry's tactile perception has changed. People preserve art more through a screen, through scrolling, tapping, and zooming. These gestures seem to define where we are at the moment radically enough to reconsider what jewelry could be."[12]

Most importantly, these artists focus on jewelry as an agent of self-actualization. By cultivating a succinct image, artists give onlookers a total contextual package to follow, to participate in, affording others the chance to superimpose one's own individuality or cultural identity onto the objects, and vice versa. They are creating a worthy and curious jewelry subculture. It's simple: If you want people to like the jewelry, to imagine themselves with it, to wear it, all you need to do is show them how.

If you want people to like the jewelry, to imagine themselves with it, to wear it, all you need to do is show them how.

Kellie Riggs (BFA, RISD, 2011) is a writer and curator with a focus on contemporary jewelry. She was based in Italy for seven years as a result of a Fulbright grant. She recently relocated to New York City as an MA candidate at New York University in Visual Art Administration, and a guest curator at the Museum of Arts and Design. Non-Stick Nostalgia *opens March 2019 and addresses many of the themes presented in this article.*

1 From in-person interview between gallerist and author, Amsterdam, 2012. / **2** According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, a subculture is a "cultural group within a larger culture, often having beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture." / **3** The attendance at and participation in Munich Jewellery Week has grown exponentially since 2006, when there were only twelve listed artist-run shows; in 2018 there were more than a hundred. Kellie Riggs, "Free Reign, Artist-Run Exhibitions in Munich," *Current Obsession Paper* No.1, 2014. http://www.current-obsession.com/free-reign/ / **4** Artists included Boyd, Emily Cobb, Aaron Patrick Decker, Steven Gordon Holman, Zachery Lechtenberg, and Mallory Weston. [Located at Center Court Gallery, in Munich.] / **5** The inscription on the grill translates to, "Speak Chinese, we're in America," as a way to reclaim the title words of the piece, something she heard at a young age while speaking Cantonese to some friends. / **6** Stated by the artist in an in-person interview, 2018. / **7** Stated by the artist in an email-based interview, 2018. / **8** Stated by the artist in an email-based interview, 2018. / **9** If you were about to knock the selfie as illegitimate somehow, don't forget they've been endorsed by the likes of Richard Prince, and legitimized by the one and only Cindy Sherman on her own Instagram account! / **10** Stated by the artist in an email-based interview, 2018. / **11** Stated by the artist in an email-based interview, 2018. / **12** Stated by the artist in an email-based interview, 2018.

Body Armor

MoMA PS1
6.3.18 – 9.9.18

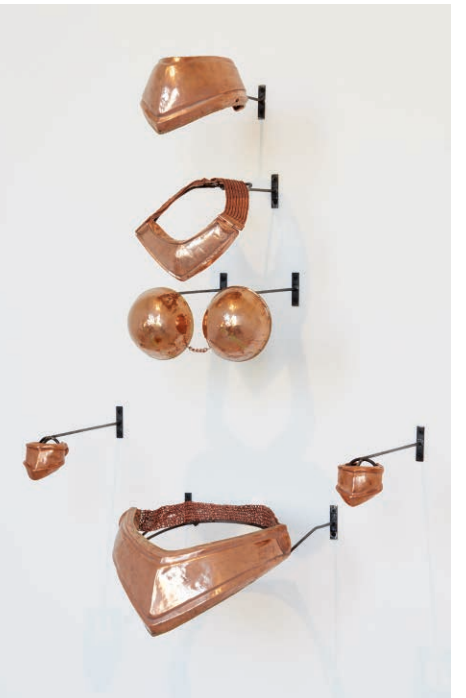
By Luci Jockel

When was the last time you were truly aware of your body and how it fits into the world around it? When encountering a shift in scale or physicality, as one might when standing beneath a skyscraper or at the edge of a precipice, one can experience a bodily awareness that is both humbling and empowering. That sensation was palpable in the recent exhibition *Body Armor*, which featured the works of Maryam Hoseini, Zadie Xa, Delilah Montoya, and Ana Pellicer, all of whom reimagine the traditions and symbolism of adornment across cultures, communities, and generations.

This exhibition, curated by MoMA PS1 assistant curator Jocelyn Miller, is part of a relatively new field of inquiry, as contemporary jewelry and adornment increasingly make their way into contemporary museum spaces. Housed within the walls of PS1, MoMA's kunsthalle focuses on "displaying the most experimental art in the world"; these works are juxtaposed against other kinds of avant-garde contemporary artwork.[1] *Body Armor* argues that the concept of adornment and its ability to communicate one's identity is ideal fodder for exploration across media by artists from a variety of vantage points.

Entering the first room, one is confronted with Delilah Montoya's black-and-white photographs of multicultural female boxers in their gear: they wear boxing gloves, a championship belt, and a look of pure determination that conveys a mix of fear and empowerment. In *Storm* (2006), a boxer shows off her biceps, her back to the camera, gloves and bra encrusted with jewels that spell out her name. *Storm* confronts the viewer, all that we know about our adversary is through her adornment. The athletes' gloves, belts, and tattoos stand as trophies that symbolize their status, prowess, and ability to intimidate. Beyond the ropes of the ring, these nonconformists challenge the meaning of femininity and its role in violence and physicality.

In Ana Pellicer's *Vestuario Para Nahui Ollin* (1999),



Installation view of the work of Ana Pellicer, *Vestuario para Nahui Ollin*, 1999 in *Body Armor*, on view at MoMA PS1 through September 9, 2018. Image courtesy MoMA PS1. Photo by Matthew Septimus.

Installation view of the work of Ana Pellicer, *Collar de Oaxaca*, 1986 in *Body Armor*, on view at MoMA PS1 through September 9, 2018. Image courtesy MoMA PS1. Photo by Matthew Septimus.

a suit of hammered copper body armor—a headplate, chestplate, breastplates, cuffs, and pelvic plate—was installed on steel armatures, as if you had entered the lair of a warrior. The piece is meant to commemorate the Mexican painter, poet, model, and activist Nahui Ollin (1893–1978). Born Carmen Mondragón, she was the muse of artists such as Pablo Picasso, Diego Rivera, and Henri Matisse, who gave her the name Nahui Ollin, which Pellicer roughly translates from the Aztec as "earthquake." Pellicer's piece was activated as a costume through a play, *Nahuí Ollin Mujer de Luz,* put on by Pellicer and Jorge Reyes in 1999, which paid tribute to Ollin's revolutionary energy.[2]

The exhibition concluded with an impressive thirty-four-foot-tall copper chain necklace, hung from the ceiling, that towered over the room and glowed with the backlight of two windows that echoed its curved peak. Pellicer made *Collar de Oaxaca* in 1986 for the Statue of Liberty, along with a nineteen-foot bracelet, ring, hoop earring, brooch, and axe. The jewelry, at the scale of twenty-eight times actual life size, was displayed in the lobby of the World Trade Center in 1986, to commemorate the centennial of this American icon. Pellicer, who fabricated the pieces with the local women of the Mexican state of Michoacan, based the style of adornment on "traditional Mexican jewelry worn by the Tarascan women indigenous to [her] hometown of Santa Clara del Cobre."[3] The idea of adorning a monument that was built as a symbol of freedom and the promise of America with traditional Mexican jewelry is a reminder of the importance of traditions brought to this country from other cultures, as well as the struggles continually faced by women in patriarchy. At a time when xenophobia is increasing in the United States; when the current administration is positioned aggressively toward our Mexican neighbors; when women continue to be silenced, this work shows how adornment encapsulates resilience.

Maryam Hoseini's colorful and surrealistic paintings featured narrative and playful compositions of geometric shapes and bodies dancing across the panels—yet the bodies were headless, limbs were severed. Zadie Xa, a fiber artist and performer, exhibited intricately hand-stitched garments that explore cultural impact on self-identity. Both artists investigate a theme often approached by metalsmiths: ownership of one's identity through self-presentation.

Body Armor offered a contemporary perspective on adornment through different media such as photography, painting, costume, and jewelry. Adornment can be either object or bodily expression: something worn to battle discrimination. The work of these four artists instilled a sense of personal and collective empowerment at a time when many people and communities continue to face and fight inequality and injustice. Ultimately, the work in *Body Armor* allowed for a bodily experience that exerted a force: a shiver down the spine, and perhaps an incitement to prepare for battle.

Luci Jockel is an artist and the Jewelry/Metals Shop Supervisor at University of the Arts.

1 MoMA PS1 Profile, http://momaps1.org/about/. / 2 Devon Van Houten Maldonado, "A Mexican Metalworker's Colossal Jewelry for the Statue of Liberty," *Hyperallergic*, 6 Sept. 2017, hyperallergic.com/398846/a-mexican-metalworkers-colossal-jewelry-for-the-statue-of-liberty/. / 3 Wall text for *Collar de Oaxaca* by Anna Pellicer, *Body Armor* exhibition, MoMA PS1, June 3–September 9, 2018.

Heather White: Blind Artifacts

Jewelers'Werk Galerie
Washington, D.C.
5.19.18 - 6.9.18

By Adriana G. Radulescu

Heather White is in pursuit of shapes. Her solo exhibition *Blind Artifacts* was a complex and vibrant collection of them. This show was the artist's first solo exhibition since 2009, when her "Coltivando con Rosso" series was shown at Mobilia Gallery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Like a composer working on a fugue, White's collection, which included work from several series, titled "black and gold," "render," "folds," "Oh," "doublet," "bell and paddle," and "pancake...," is built on a primary motif. A funnel shape is the center of stand-alone pieces, and multiplied and repeated in others. Each time, White changes the shape, transforming and translating in a steady sequence. A counter shape may appear: a paddle, a bell, a yo-yo, side by side or folded together, each becoming a primary voice. From the harmony of shapes a progressive musical rhythm is revealed. "bell and paddle" (2018) is a good example of this musicality, with shapes merging into a new form, and the glimpse of deep gold revealing an inner preciousness of the vessel.

The use of color is a new exploration for White, partly inspired by her reading of Victoria Finlay's book *Color: A Natural History of the Palette.*[1] Colored with cold enamel resin in pastels with granulated or polished smooth surfaces, the lively yo-yos, a series named "Oh," and the "doublet" series

Heather White, *bell and paddle*, 2018, silver, gold, linen cord. 3 × 2.5 × 1 in. Courtesy of Jewelers'Werk Galerie. Photo by Heather White

Heather White, *render with button*, 2018, nickel, silver, gold, linen cord. 3 × 1.5 × .5 in. Private collection. Photo by Heather White.

in teal, orange, green, yellow, and blue are enchanting: the shapes are playful, and there is a seductive contrast between surfaces left naked, or with oxidized silver juxtaposed against granulated or shiny color.

The waxes that serve as the base of White's efforts were worked only by hand, with no mechanical tools. The shapes were created through instinct, feeling, molding, and the warmth of the artist's hands. The waxes were imagined, their shapes imprinted with the fingers without consciously looking at them—hence the exhibition's title. The result is that no two shapes are alike. In the artist's process, the cut ends of the necessary sprues of metal became integral to the design. Casting imperfections were repaired with gold, recalling the traditional Japanese technique of *kintsugi,* used for centuries to mend ceramics. Pieces were sometimes re-cast several times, such as in *render with button* (2018). This intensive and introspective process creates metal surfaces rich in texture and inviting to the touch, creating space for a quiet experience within the frenzied pace of contemporary life.

White's pieces were purposely displayed in a way that encouraged their handling, within reach on a long table and at eye level on the walls. Their shapes and colors stood in stark contrast to the gallery's minimalist white interior. Line drawings presented studies of shapes that sometimes merged from one drawing page into another, as intimate images bearing witness to White's personal introspection. I found the visual and tactile exploration of White's pieces rewarding. Many are doublefaced, and the enameled "folds" include surprises of color underneath, with no obvious front or back. Polished snubs, from the intentionally placed sprues, reflect light and color. For White, emotions and feelings must be explored, not hidden. Taking the time to listen mindfully to the stories that these shapes, impressions, and textures convey connects one with the artist. As she writes in the exhibition statement, "As ornament, these biomorphic forms invite the wearer to touch and explore their surfaces, and in doing so they echo the fluid subconscious process with which these objects began."

These pieces are testimony to Heather White's craftsmanship and inventiveness in finding ways of working outside a traditional studio sometimes. Molding for *Blind Artifacts* did not necessarily happen at the bench. Instead, White carried a box with waxes around with her, and worked on them while going about her daily routine, seeing all of life's mundane tasks as an opportunity for self-expression. The artist uses a translucent ivory color wax for the shapes, and red wax for the sprues. That makes the final waxes prior to casting look like fantastic flowers, like those described in the tales of the German Romantic writer and artist E.T.A. Hoffmann.[2] The waxes were not part of the exhibition, but the artist brought them to the gallery, along with her imagery and notes documenting the process.

The remembrance of impressions on surfaces is a recurring theme across White's career, as in the similar forms and shapes of her earlier "Botanical Fiction" series (2003–2015, with, according to the artist, more pieces waiting to be made). For that series, she created flowers from molds of fragmented sections of the human body; composed further, transformed in waxes and casted in metal, those flowers became brooches, neckpieces, pins, all embedded with the memory of the surfaces from which they were molded. While the reminiscence of "Botanical Fiction" shapes exists in *Blind Artifacts,* the new work is more abstract and more robust in textures and color.

Transformation of shape and perception from one material to other is important in Heather White's work. Her complex casting process, from early conception by sketching, or direct wax carving, or creating the mold, to the selection of metal and preparation of the cast implies a thoughtful connection between the artist's consciousness and the final object. Ultimately, *Blind Artifacts* is a conversation of shapes, each with their individual discourse and transformation. At times one is predominant; at others the shapes merge or fold together. In due course they all replicate each other, with repeating motifs like a well-composed fugue.

Adriana G. Radulescu is an architect and artist based in Washington, D.C.

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1 Victoria Finlay, *Color: A Natural History of the Palette* (New York: Random House, 2004). / **2** Sentences like this one from Hoffmann reflect the feeling one has when entering the gallery: "Anselmus walked on in high spirits, behind the Archivarius; they passed from this corridor into a hall, or rather into a lordly greenhouse: for on both sides, up to the ceiling, grew all sorts of rare wondrous flowers, indeed, great trees with strangely formed leaves and blossoms." *E.T.A. Hoffmann: The Golden Pot and Other Tales*, trans. and ed. Ritchie Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 31.

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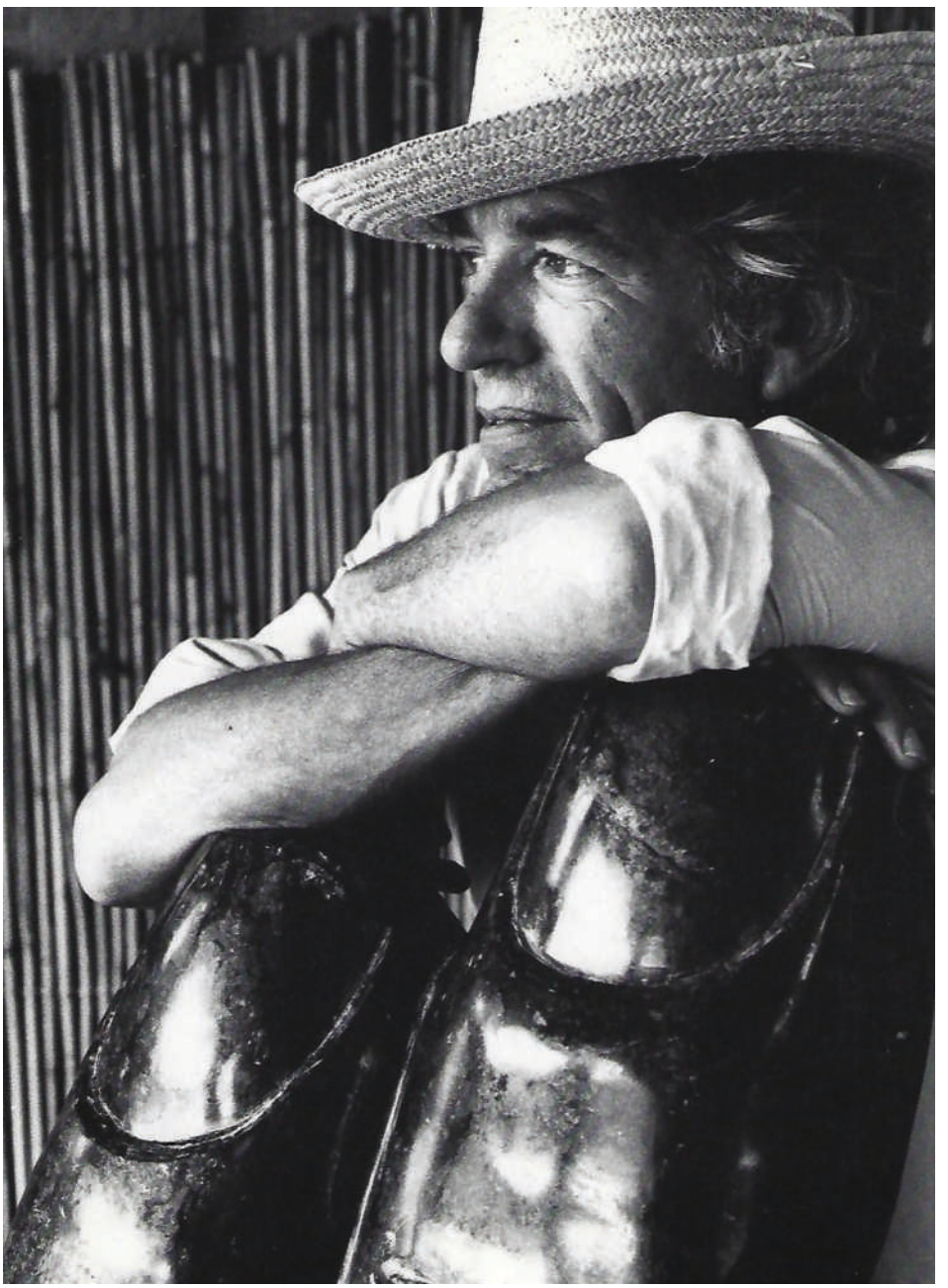
BRUNO MARTINAZZI: IN MEMORIAM (1923–2018)

BY HELEN W. DRUTT ENGLISH



Bruno Martinazzi

LISTENING TO Schubert's Piano Sonata in G major, and near his beloved wife, Carla, children Peter and Paola, and devoted friends Heidi and Karl Bollmann, Bruno Martinazzi entered eternity on July 14, 2018, in Ansedonia, Italy. He left as he lived, in quiet elegance. He was a man for all seasons.

Bruno Martinazzi's work was drawn from his subconscious, and revealed itself as he journeyed through his intellect. He was a man whose search for beauty led him down many paths during his almost ninety-five years. Pensive, gentle, soft-spoken, Bruno retained a deep connection with his soul. Influenced by nature, love, and death, and responsive to the political and social climate of his time, he also maintained a deep commitment to his family and friends. His creative life, however, was central to his being.

At the young age of three, Bruno was introduced to the sublime majesty of mountain ranges by his father, who tragically died when he was four. Mountain climbing and his romance with rugged, ice-capped cliffs became part of his intermittent challenges with nature. The adjacent planes of the high alpine formations began to influence his aesthetic direction, as visible in his sculpture and jewelry.

The recesses of Bruno's memory connected him with his past. He held the image of himself as a seven-year-old

boy, watching and listening to Mussolini as he called out to the crowd with a megaphone in the Piazza Vittorio Veneto. His recollections of his maternal grandfather's artist studio established his love of art. He remembered the tragic death of his sister Bala, twenty years after the death of the father he barely knew. He recalled the warmth and love he felt when he met Carla and embraced her children, Peter and Paolo, as his own. His love of music, which began as a child, remained an enduring gift. Bruno's heart ached for his losses, and yet, like a phoenix rising from the fire, he turned pain and memories into written and physical beauty.

Martinazzi's response to the Italian nonviolent movement acted as a catalyst for him to create a body of work in 1985 entitled *Contro Le Guerre.* A head with soft, piercing eyes and an open mouth suggesting the terror and despair of that moment is cloaked in the beauty of carved pink marble. A person's palm of gold is spread open to become a brooch, a symbolic reminder of a tragic moment. White marble rises from the ground to mark the grave of a young girl, her life silenced and held in frozen form as her face looks down upon us. Barely touching, gold lovers' lips form a necklace, and gold fingers embrace the wrist. Buttocks, abdomen, eye, apple are voluptuous in their Martinazzi forms; they seem to swell and rise above rigid gold. Monumental stone fists commissioned for Fiat in Turin remind us of the struggle of human forces within a factory. Recipient of the Association for Goldsmiths' Art Golden Ring of Honour in Hanau, Germany, in 1987, Martinazzi interpreted the traditional eagle and transformed it into *Aquila,* a voluptuous eye of the eagle for Anton Cepka, the next recipient. He created paper maquettes and drawings of the parts of the body to find the unified whole. In his Turin studio, angles of juxtaposed cardboard models emerge like a Madonna of quiet beauty.

Bruno Martinazzi
Neck Jewelry, 1971
20 karat yellow gold, 18 karat white gold
5.5 × 12 × 12 cm

Bruno Martinazzi
Le Due Forze, 1972/1978
serpentine rock from Gressoney
320 × 230 × 220 cm, 270 × 310 × 235 cm

Bruno understood silence and the need for isolation. A solitary figure, he quietly walked under the arcades of the familiar streets in Turin. He pulled a cart heavy with stone over a dirt road near the old convent in Salussola, or watched the sea as he contemplated the hidden crevices and cliffs of his beloved Ansedonia. Occasional respite from Bruno's life in Turin brought him to the old convent of Salussola, affording him the opportunity to contemplate as he explored ideas that were lurking within his mind in depth. It was there, in 1985–86, that the bible *I Cieli e La Terra e Tulle Le Tue Creature* was conceived, with a text and delicate drawings that revealed his sensitive responses.

A Renaissance man—chemist, artist, alchemist—Bruno explored the entire human body as well as its parts. He measured the time of matter, the time of energy; he studied myths and religions, and drew, painted, and evolved his findings into sensuous gold forms and marble and stone sculptures. Coleridge stated, "The old definition of beauty, in the Roman school, was multitude in unity and there is no doubt that such is the principle of beauty." This concept is evidenced in Bruno's work, and embodies his continuous search for meaning.

I first met Bruno in Vienna in 1980, during the World Crafts Council Conference. Peter Skubic had curated Schmuck International at the Kunsthaus. The exhibition was a catalyst that brought artists, collectors, and curators to Austria. It was the fulcrum that brought "our world" together. The rest is a history to be written.

Last October 19, three months after his death, Bruno's ashes arrived from Tuscany and were placed in the family tomb in the Cemetery of Sagliano Micca, a place he chose himself, in the mountains of Biella. On December 10, 2018, the ninety-fifth anniversary of his birthday, a memorial for Bruno was held in Turin at the Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti, where he had been a longtime professor.

Helen W. Drutt English is a craft historian, educator, and Trustee of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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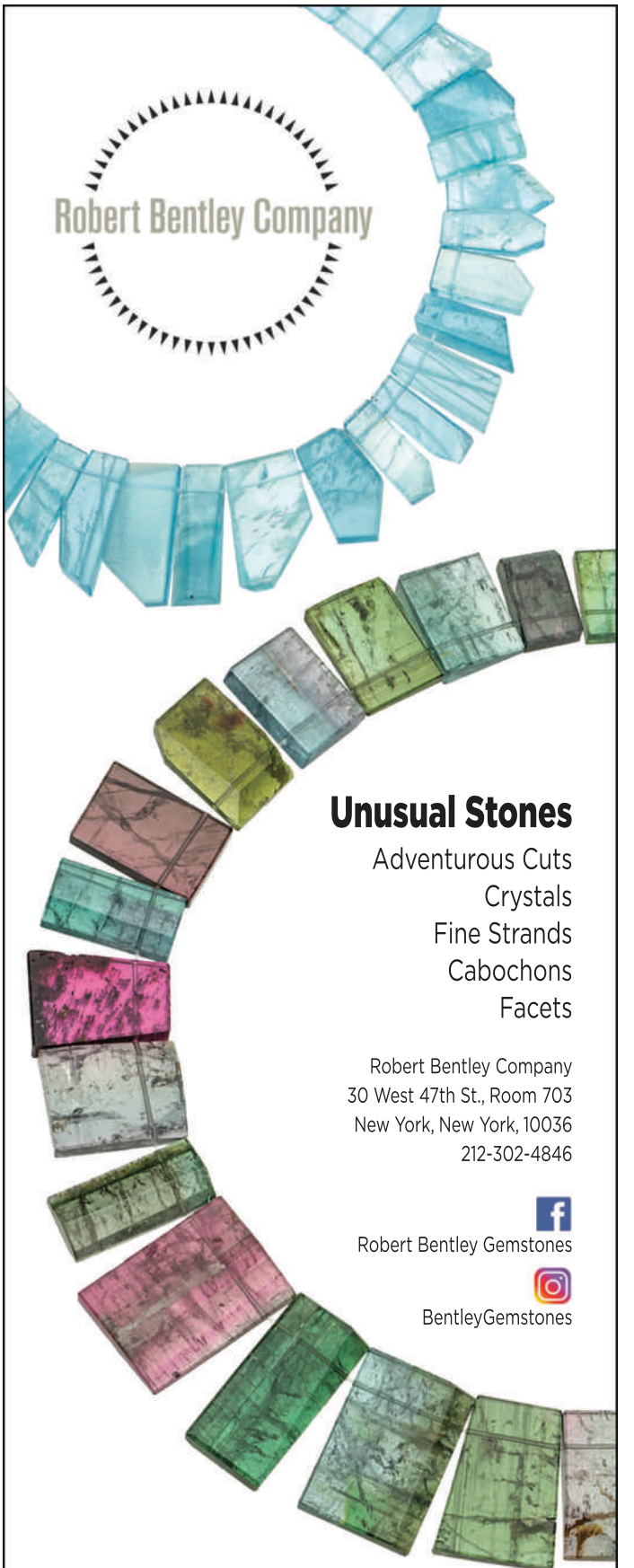

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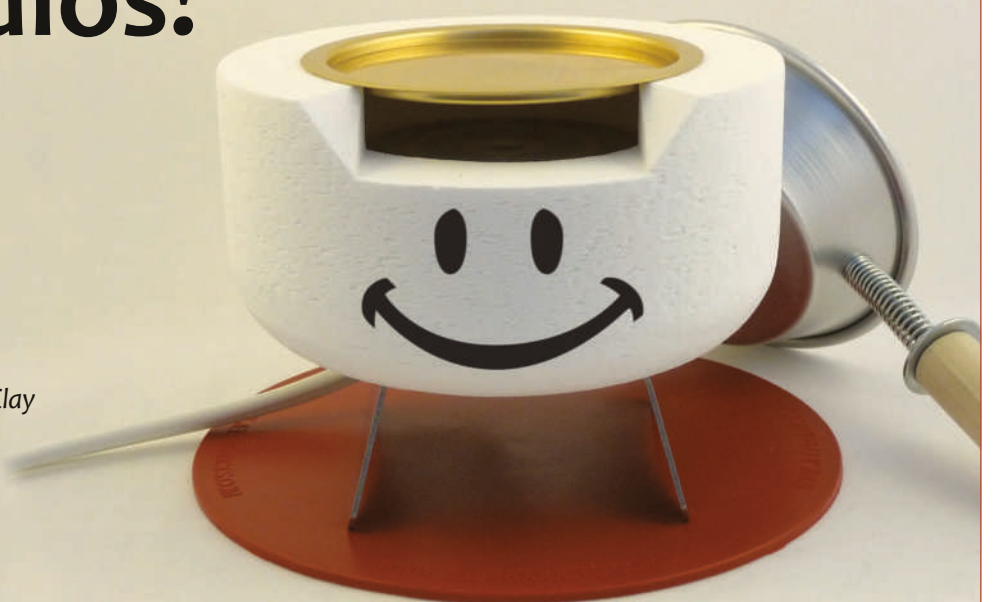

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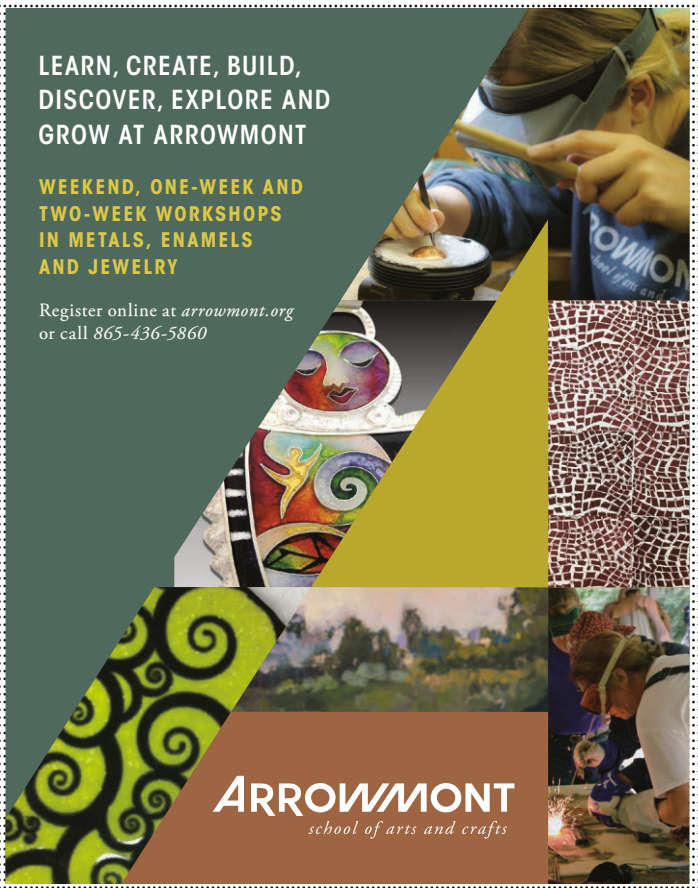

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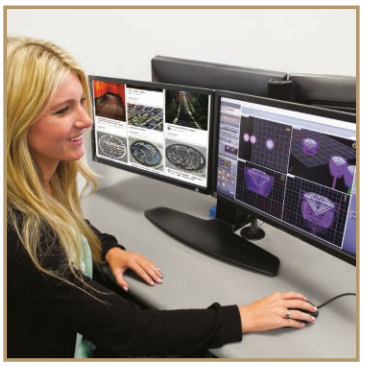

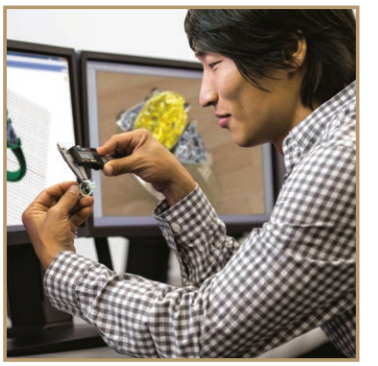

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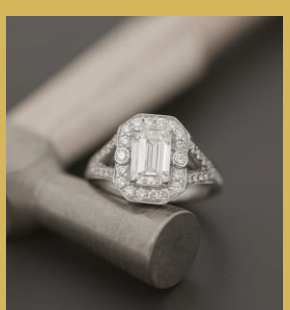

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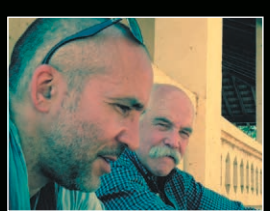
Meet Toolbox Initiative founders Matthieu Cheminée and Tim McCreight, watch the For the Love of Jewelers video and learn how you can get involved: Visit **riojeweler.com**.